

Education for Eternity

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

My beloved brothers and sisters, what a challenge and what a delightful experience to be with you here tonight.

I am constantly impressed with this beautiful campus. I am awed by the power of the administration and faculty, and, as I see the thousands of students, I want to sing, “Behold! a royal army.”¹

In all the world, the Brigham Young University is the greatest institution of learning. This statement I have made numerous times. I believe it sincerely. There are many criteria by which a university can be judged and appraised and evaluated. The special qualities of Brigham Young University lie not in its bigness; there are a number of much larger universities.

It should not be judged by its affluence and the amount of money available for buildings, research, and other facilities. It should not be judged by prestige, for there are more statusful institutions as the world measures status.

The uniqueness of Brigham Young University lies in its special role—education

for eternity—which it must carry in addition to the usual tasks of a university. This means concern—curricular and behavioral—for not only the “whole man” but for the “eternal man.” Where all universities seek to preserve the heritage of knowledge that history has washed to their feet, this faculty has a double heritage—the preserving of the knowledge of men and the revealed truths sent from heaven.

While all universities seek to push back the frontiers of knowledge further and further, this faculty must do that and also keep new knowledge in perspective so that the avalanche of facts does not carry away saving, exalting truths from the value systems of our youth.

In addition, this faculty must aid the youth of the kingdom in establishing yet another educational expectation—that there are yet “many great and important things”² to be revealed which require an intellectual and spiritual posture of readiness and openness. Where other institutions of higher education aim, in part, at educating and training students

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for various careers, this faculty must do that vital job and do it superbly well, but it must do far more. It must train a cadre of committed, educated youth who can serve effectively, not only in the world of work but in the growing kingdom of God in which skilled leadership is such a vital commodity.

This time of intellectual testing must also be a time of equivalent testing and flexing in things spiritual too. "The spirit giveth life"³ is so true in so many ways. When there is an inner emptiness in the life of man, his surroundings, however affluent, cannot compensate. When there is a crisis of purpose, nothing will really seem worthwhile or meaningful. When man's relationship with God has been breached, we will be, as Isaiah said, restless as the "sea, [which] cannot rest."⁴

A university or an individual can have all the surface signs of security and yet still be empty inside. You must fill the classrooms and halls of this campus with facts, but fill them also with the Spirit of the Master Teacher, who said to the Nephites of the things He had done, "Even so shall ye do unto the world."⁵

"Education for eternity" is not the kind of phrase one would expect to have carved in the stone of a new secular university; it is not the kind of commitment that would be widely shared in the retreat from real religion we see around us in the world. Yet it is a task for which we do not apologize. Those who do not share this purpose, however, will respect this faculty for its genuine achievements in the world of secular scholarship. The extra missions noted previously do not excuse you from reasonable achievement in your chosen field. You can, in fact, often be more effective in the service you render students if students see you as individuals who have blended successfully things secular and things spiritual in a way that has brought to you earned respect in both realms.

As I see you leaders here, knowing you personally and recognizing the depth of your knowledge and your outstanding

accomplishments in your chosen fields, I honor you and appreciate you greatly. And then I realize also that in the breast of everyone there is a deep spiritual feeling with the Master. We know there are good men and women elsewhere, but here, here we have the choice group.

When measured with the true measuring rod, the Brigham Young University stands preeminent. Certainly the true measure of an institution of learning would be the impact it makes on the total lives of its students. On high levels in business, industry, professional, and other fields, great men and women of prominence in many areas are BYU alumni.

Orison Swett Marden wrote:

It is a sad sight to see thousands of students graduated every year from our grand institutions whose object is to make stalwart, independent, self-supporting men turned out into the world saplings instead of stalwart oaks, "memory glands" instead of brainy men, helpless instead of self-supporting, sickly instead of robust, weak instead of strong, leaning instead of erect. "So many promising youths, and never a finished man!"⁶

You tell me that these nearly seven thousand returned missionaries render a stabilizing influence with their deep religious convictions and their serious application. You tell me that a high percentage of the twenty thousand students actually hold positions of leadership in Church organizations, that nearly all of them attend sacrament meetings, and that the large majority who have income pay their tithing. These students voluntarily assemble weekly to hear religious messages from the leaders of the Church. What a great institution this is, where professors, staff members, and students work together in glorious harmony in stake presidencies, bishoprics, and quorum and auxiliary leadership.

It is notable that numerous students change their lives on this campus. Many who had never seriously planned missions for

themselves now eagerly look forward to that day. Many who had given little thought to a temple marriage are here inspired to chart their course in that direction.

How the world needs a light in the dark, even a refuge—a vault for keeping the jewels and treasures of life and a big wastebasket into which can be dumped the trash and filth and destructive ideologies and eccentric activities. While great universities and colleges seem to have abandoned all attempts to influence the moral lives of their students, this university must hold the line. Apparently such an attitude seems to be growing on the campuses of our nation, and what can we expect of the graduates tomorrow?

There are holes in the fabric of our political system; our social world continues to show corruption. A climate is coming into being which seems not only to permit crimes against society but to actually encourage them indirectly. “Is there a ‘sick’ society in the U.S.?” *U.S. News and World Report* asked in a recent issue.⁷

In the current issue of the *Instructor*, President David O. McKay, after speaking of our carelessness in keeping our bodies fit and calling attention to the peril of physical decay, reminded us that spiritual decay is more serious. He said:

But, great as is the peril of physical decay, greater is the peril of spiritual decay. The peril of this century is spiritual apathy. As the body requires sunlight, good food, proper exercise and rest, so the spirit of man requires the sunlight of the Holy Spirit, proper exercise of the spiritual functions, the avoiding of evils that affect spiritual health that are more ravaging in their effects than the dire diseases that attack the body.

*. . . Never before have the forces of evil been arrayed in such deadly formation as they are now. . . . Satan and his forces are attacking the high ideals and sacred standards which protect our spirituality. One cannot help but be alarmed by the ever-increasing crime wave.*⁸

In our sick society, children are not required to work; time hangs heavily on their hands. Their crimes run into theft and beatings, and even murders fill more of their time. Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco; Dupont Circle in Washington, DC; and East Village in New York City may be net results of some of the laxities and looseness in morals with increases in illegitimacy. And numerous evils of our time may look to the deteriorating ethical standards proposed often by professors in what are termed great universities. God’s ways and eternal standards are laughed at, and “situation ethics”⁹—making each person his own moral judge and authority—seem to be responsible for the sickness of our society. How can it survive?

When these numerous other things are weighed and considered, we come to realize our responsibility at BYU becomes greater and greater. We must carry the torch and light the way, and this faculty and staff must stand like a concrete wall to prevent these strange, worldly ideologies and concepts from invading this, one of the last bastions of resisting strength.

We should be knowledgeable. When we talk of godhood and creatorship and eternal increase, we have already soared far out beyond the comprehension of most men. To attain those great accomplishments, one would need to know all about astronomy, biology, physiology, psychology, and all of the arts and sciences. The obtaining of all this knowledge will come largely after our earth life. These questions are often asked: “Why a doctrine-teaching and a character-building university?” “Why not let men do, think, and move as they please?”

Robert A. Millikan talked about the idea that “science has gone ahead so fast man can spend 50 years just learning how to use wisely what he already knows.”¹⁰ Millikan stated:

The Western world has in the past 100 years seen more changes in the external conditions under

*which the average man lives, and also in his beliefs and fundamental conceptions, than occurred during all the preceding 4,000 years!*¹¹

Our Brigham Young insisted:

*Learn everything that the children of men know, and be prepared for the most refined society upon the face of the earth, then improve upon this until we are prepared and permitted to enter the society of the blessed—the holy angels that dwell in the presence of God.*¹²

The Lord seems never to have placed a premium on ignorance, and yet He has, in many cases, found His better-trained people unresponsive to the spiritual and has had to use spiritual giants with less training to carry on His work. Peter was said to be ignorant and unlearned while Nicodemus was, as the Savior said, a master, a trained one, an educated man. And while Nicodemus would in his aging process gradually lose his prestige and his strength and go to the grave a man of letters without eternal knowledge, Peter would go to his reputed crucifixion the greatest man in all the world—perhaps still lacking considerably in secular knowledge, which he would later acquire, but being preeminent in the greater, more important knowledge of the eternities and of God and His creations and their destinies. And Paul gave us the key:

*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*¹³

*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*¹⁴

It is interesting to note that most of us have a tendency to want to ape the ways of our neighbor, in styles or curricula or universities. If New York or Paris speaks, the dresses are

lengthened or shortened; if San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury speaks, men's hair grows longer, beards appear, and baths are less frequent. If the Joneses have a Cadillac, all want Cadillacs. If a nation has a king, all want a king. We seem reluctant to establish our own standards, make our own styles, or follow our own patterns which are based on dignity, comfort, and propriety.

Israel did want a king. "Now make us a king," they cried to Samuel, "to judge us like all the nations."¹⁵

And when Samuel prayed, the Lord said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."¹⁶

And then, with the inspiration of the Lord, Samuel pointed out to the people the hazards of having a king. The king would recruit their sons in battle. Their daughters would serve in confectionaries and kitchens and bakeries. Their sons would have to work the king's ground and reap his harvests and make his spears and swords and rebuild his chariots and train his horses. He would appropriate their vineyards and olive yards to feed his servants, and he would tax them heavily.¹⁷

In spite of all these dire predictions, the people still said, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; . . . like all the [other] nations."¹⁸

Though our world reels and trembles, we must stand firm and see that behavior troubles do not invade our campus as they do other campuses and that we are not like other universities.

We have been speaking of mind and spirit and body, of the immortal man and the mortal man. We have been speaking of earthly things and spiritual things, of time and eternity. Of the two, the spiritual development is the greater, for it is permanent and lasting, and it incorporates all other proper secular development.

The Lord inspired Jacob to correlate the secular and the spiritual when he said, "To be

learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.”¹⁹

Someone has said, “If the world needs a bomb to destroy the cities and its peoples and the world, the laboratory of the American university can supply it.”

And we say, “If the world needs messengers of peace and teachers of righteousness and builders of character and inspirers of faith in God, here is the university that can do all this—here at the Brigham Young University.”

Even here we give to the first cause our lesser attention and, though we are far in front of other institutions, still we give less time, less thought, and less effort to the actual teaching of the spiritual as contrasted with the secular. But perhaps this imbalance of time and energy and effort is considerably compensated for if all of you instructors in all classes teach the gospel, especially by example. Most of you teach eloquently in this manner. Most of you will be frequent attenders at the temple and will serve in the stakes and wards and priesthood and auxiliary organizations. Some of you will be leaders in general Church positions. All of you will be living all the commandments of the Lord—paying a full tithing and observing the Word of Wisdom—not because it is expected but because it is right.

In your homes will be an absence of friction and conflict—not because forty thousand eyes are upon you but because you love the Lord, your family, and the program. You will observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy as you live all other commandments—not because the multitudes might see you but because of the Lord who gave them. Your home evenings will be regular and inspirational and your family prayers, both morning and night, will be constant—not because you are under command but because you love your family and our BYU family of twenty thousand who will feel the spirituality emanating from you. You will always keep solvent, always be honest to the *n*th degree, and always be full of integrity—not

because you are required to do so to keep your position but because you believe fully that God gives no commandments which are not for our own good. Your example is better than even your precept, for to teach one thing and to do another is like “sounding brass, [and] tinkling cymbal[s].”²⁰

This university is not the place for mercenaries. The Revolutionary War was lost by the British partly because they employed mercenaries to fight for them. But the winning colonists had a real cause. If your salary, which we hope is adequate, should be incidental and your grand and magnificent obsession would be the youth and their growth, their vision, and their development, I would hope that each of you in joy and peace and satisfaction would continue to lift the souls and carry forward the character-building program.

It would be my hope that twenty thousand students might feel the normalcy and beauty of your lives. I hope you will each qualify for the students’ admiration and affection. It is my hope that these youth will have abundant lives and beautiful families patterned after the ideal of an eternal family, with you for their example.

This would lead me to expect from you honor, integrity, cleanliness, and faith. I would expect you to appear before these young people well dressed, well groomed, and positive—happy people from homes where peace and love have left their warm, vibrant influence as your day begins. I would want them to have the feeling that you, their instructor, that very morning, had come from a loving home where peace reigns and love is enthroned and to know instinctively by your spirit that you were that morning on your knees with your family and that there were soft words of pleading to your Heavenly Father for guidance—not only for your little family kneeling with you but for your larger family also at that moment scurrying about their apartments to get ready for your class.

Brigham Young said:

*Let our teachers ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, to bestow upon them and upon their scholars the spirit of wisdom and intelligence from heaven; ask for skill to control and ability to teach on the part of the teacher, and willingness to be controlled and aptability to be taught on the part of the scholars.*²¹

I would like these youth to see their instructors in community life as dignified, happy cooperators; in Church life as devout, dependable, efficient leaders; and in personal life as honorable and full of integrity. As President John Taylor said, "Let us live so that . . . angels can minister to us and the Holy Spirit dwell with us."²²

Here there should be loyalty at its ultimate best. Loyalty is the stuff of which great souls are made. I would expect that no member of the faculty or staff would continue in the employ of this institution if he or she did not have deep assurance of the divinity of the gospel of Christ, the truth of the Church, the correctness of the doctrines, and the destiny of the school.

The BYU is dedicated to the building of character and faith, for character is higher than intellect, and its teachers must in all propriety so dedicate themselves. That goal is the same as that of our Eternal Father: "To bring to pass the . . . eternal life of man."²³ Every instructor knows before coming to this campus what the aims are and is committed to the furthering of those objectives.

If one cannot conscientiously accept the policies and program of the institution, there is no wrong in his moving to an environment that is compatible and friendly to his concepts. But for a Ford employee to downgrade his company or its products, for a General Electric man to be unappreciative of his company, or for an employee of a bank to discredit that institution would be hypocrisy and disloyalty. There are ways to right wrongs, to improve services, or

to bring about proper changes. To set about to counter the established policies or approved interpretations of the doctrines of the Church would be disloyal and unbecoming of anyone.

No one could justifiably accept salary or favors from an institution whose policies he could not in principle accept and defend.

This is an institution peculiar and different from all others. Other schools have been organized by states, countries, churches, groups, and individuals. This great university was organized by the Lord God.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. expressed clearly our concepts:

Science and worldly knowledge must question every demonstration, every experiment, every conclusion, every phenomenon that seems a fact, for only by this method may the truths of the natural law become known to us, save by specific revelation.

*But we shall also expect you to know that, in matters pertaining to our spiritual lives, God's revealed will, his laws, his commandments, declared not only directly by himself, but by and through his servants, must be taken unquestioned, because they are the ultimate truths that shape and control our destinies.*²⁴

President Clark also said:

Now brethren and sisters, it is your privilege to teach the revealed word of God. You are not expected to advance new theories, to give private interpretations, nor to clarify the mysteries. You do not need to, nor can you or anyone else, answer all the questions that the youth can ask. You need not be embarrassed to tell them that you cannot fully answer certain questions and that the Lord has not seen fit to reveal all His mysteries. Perhaps many would like to know the age of the earth, the exact method of its organization, the method of spirit procreation.

The doctrines of the Church will be revealed through the prophet, and he will interpret

them as needed. To one such member who presumed to dictate to the prophet concerning a matter which had been settled long years ago, I wrote:

I cannot believe you would presume to command your God or to make a demand on the prophet of God! No situation or condition could possibly justify you in any such monumental presumption. To any such, I must quote the Lord: "And thou shalt not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church."²⁵

When the Lord has set a policy and His leaders have established it, certainly it would be in bad taste and improper for people to keep sniping at it.

I knew a man who received his bank salary yet secretly robbed his bank of its money. I knew a woman who was supported by a business, but she constantly revealed its inner weaknesses to her associates. I knew a man who received the confidences of persons in trouble and revealed them to his associates. I knew a man who belonged to the Church and enjoyed its blessings but secretly was constantly downgrading it.

This institution and its leaders should be like the Twelve as they were left in a very difficult world by the Savior:

The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.²⁶

I like President Ernest L. Wilkinson's statement in an address:

Fundamentally our roots spring from Palmyra, rather than Cambridge. . . . If most institutions of higher learning aspire to be only communities of

scholars, we are privileged to be also a congregation of disciples. . . .

[We are men of God first and men of letters second, men of science third and noted men fourth, and men of rectitude rather than academic competence.] *Our academic training must be as impeccable as our lives. . . . A defection that would pass unnoticed elsewhere is exploited relentlessly when it occurs at BYU.²⁷*

There are relative truths and there are absolute truths. The gospel is absolute—its basic functions and teachings do not change.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. said:

The philosopher, in his worldly way, may speak of relative truth in the field of ethics and worldly knowledge, a concept that today and here may be truth, but that tomorrow and there may be error, a truth based upon man's development, his learning, his ethics, his concepts, his hopes, his aspirations, his [God]. . . .

. . . As our knowledge has widened, we, to Job's incomprehensibles, have added almost a universe of unknown physical phenomena. . . .

But we . . . have at our hands unchanging, ultimate truths which God has vouchsafed to us for our guidance, salvation, and exaltation.

They are our shields against temptation and our redemption from sin.

They give us the light for our feet; they guide us on our way.

They draw aside for us the curtains of heaven that, like Stephen of old, we may see "the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

They are the rocks upon which we build our house that the winds and storms wash not away.

They are the bridge connecting time with eternity, mortality with immortality; over it we walk from worldliness into salvation.²⁸

Whereas in other institutions there seem to be faculties and administration groups and students who are fighting for supremacy as to

the policies and conduct of the university, BYU is entirely different. It is financed and operated and sustained by the tithes of the people—poor and rich. It is governed by the board of trustees, the members of which are General Authorities of the Church. The prophet, seer, and revelator is the interpreter of the doctrines. It must be ever thus.

And Paul warned us:

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*²⁹

It would not be expected that all of the faculty should be categorically teaching religion constantly in their classes, but it is proper that every professor and teacher in this institution would keep his subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel and have all his subject matter perfumed lightly with the spirit of the gospel. Always there would be an essence, and the student would feel the presence.

Every instructor should grasp the opportunity occasionally to bear formal testimony of the truth. Every student is entitled to know the attitude and feeling and spirit of his every teacher. Certainly a science instructor or a physical education teacher or a math or art teacher could find an opportunity sometimes to mention spiritual experiences or comment on the gospel truths. This would be in harmony with the spirit of Brigham Young's charge to Karl G. Maeser, so often quoted:

*President [Young] looked steadily forward for a few moments, as though in deep thought, then said: "Brother Maeser, I want you to remember that you ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God. That is all. God bless you. Good-bye."*³⁰

That statement has been used over and over, but we must never forget it. If we begin

to ape the world and forget this injunction, we are lost. We pay our taxes; we support state schools; therefore there is no justification whatever for our spending these millions of dollars on this institution unless we mind the purposeful objective given by the prophet.

Many of us have had dreams and visions of the destiny of this great Church university. Joel said, "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."³¹

Now that we have reached the maximum in enrollment, much of the energy formerly given to growth and expansion can now be concentrated on making our dreams come true. With these revolving twenty thousand choice, last-dispensation students from all over the world running into hundreds of thousands through the years, can we not build dream castles in the air and build foundations solidly under them to develop students, faculty, a campus, and a university which would eclipse all others within the limitations of our courses?

In our world there have risen brilliant stars in drama, music, literature, sculpture, painting, science, and all the graces. For long years I have had a vision of the BYU greatly increasing its already strong position of excellence till the eyes of all the world will be upon us.

President John Taylor so prophesied, as he emphasized his words with this directive:

*You will see the day that Zion will be as far ahead of the outside world in everything pertaining to learning of every kind as we are today in regard to religious matters. You mark my words, and write them down, and see if they do not come to pass.*³²

*God expects Zion to become the praise and glory of the whole earth; so that kings, hearing of her fame, will come and gaze upon her glory.*³³

With regard to masters, surely there must be many Wagners (Richard Wagner, 1813–1883) in the BYU, approaching him or yet to come in the tomorrows—young people with love of art,

talent supreme, and eagerness to create. I hope we at BYU may produce men greater than this German composer, Wagner, but less eccentric and more spiritual.

Who of us has not sat spellbound with *Aida*, *Il Trovatore*, or other of the masterpieces of Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)? Can there never be another Verdi or his superiors? Could we not find and develop a Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)—to whom music, especially organ and choral music, owes almost as much as a religion does to its founder, say some musicians.

Is there anyone here who has not been stirred by the rich melodic voice of Enrico Caruso (1873–1921), the Italian-born operatic tenor? Surely there have been few voices which have inspired so many. Considered to be the greatest voice of his century by many, year after year he was the chief attraction at the Metropolitan Opera.

Would someone say that they produce singers best in Italy, in Germany, in Poland, or in Sweden? Remember, we draw our students from all these places. BYU should attract many and stir their blood with the messages of the ages. And they will sing songs of accomplishment, eternal marriage, and exaltation, and we at BYU shall encourage and train them.

And then there was Patti—Adelina Patti (1843–1919)—who was scintillating in her accomplishments and her greatness. She is known as an Italian singer, though she was born in Madrid. Not only did Patti have a pure, clear-toned voice but a wide range which was excelled only by her personal grace and charm, her pure style, and her loveliness. Surely at this university we can produce many Pattis in the tomorrows.

Then we remember the celebrated Jenny Lind (1820–1887), the Swedish singer with such tone faculty, such musical memory, such supremacy, and such unprecedented triumphs. Do you think there are no more voices like Jenny Lind's? Our day, our time, our people,

our generation, and our BYU should produce such as we catch the total vision of our potential and dream dreams and see visions of the future.

Brigham Young said, "Every accomplishment, every polished grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, music, and in all science and art belong to the Saints."³⁴

Many of us can still remember the enchanting Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861–1936), the Bohemian-Austrian, later American lady (who died in Hollywood), who was by many regarded as the greatest contralto of her time and a noble character also. She had sons in World War I on both sides and lost one in the American army and one in the German army.

And here at BYU, many times I have been entranced with sweet and lovely voices. I believe that deep in the throats of these BYU students of today and tomorrow are qualities superior which, superbly trained, can equal or surpass these known great singers. There was also Nellie Melba (1861–1931), the great Australian prima donna—the Melba who captivated her audiences as she sang.

BYU certainly must continue to be the greatest university, unique and different. In these fields and in many others there should be an ever-widening gap between this school and all other schools. The reason is obvious. Our professors and instructors should be peers or superiors to those at any other school in natural ability, extended training, plus the Holy Spirit, which should bring them light and truth. With hundreds of "men of God" and their associates so blessed and trained, we have the base for an increasingly efficient and worthy school.

What is the future for BYU? It has long had a strong music department, but we have hardly begun the great work that could be done here. I envision that day when the BYU symphony will surpass in popularity and performance the Philadelphia Orchestra or

the New York Philharmonic group or the Cleveland Symphony.

One great artist was asked which of all his productions was the greatest. His prompt answer was, "The next."

If we strive for perfection—the best and greatest—and are never satisfied with mediocrity, we can excel. In the field of both composition and performance, why cannot the students from here write a greater oratorio than *Messiah* by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)? The best has not yet been composed nor produced. The students can use the coming of Christ to the Nephites as the material for a greater masterpiece. Our BYU artists tomorrow may write and sing of Christ's spectacular return to the American earth in power and great glory and of His establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth in our own dispensation. No Handel nor other composer of the past or present or future could ever do justice to this great event. How could one ever portray in words and music the glories of the coming of the Father and the Son and the restoration of the doctrines and the priesthood and the keys unless he were an inspired Latter-day Saint schooled in the history and doctrines and revelations and with rich musical ability and background and training? Why cannot the BYU bring forth this producer?

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), the Irish dramatist and critic, summed up an approach to life: "[Other people]," he said, "see things; and . . . say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'"³⁵ We need people here who can dream of things that never were and ask, "Why not?"

Dom Jae passed on this quotation:

*Blessed is the man with new worlds to conquer. For him the future gleams with promise. He never attains ultimate success—is never satisfied—is ever on the way to better things. Ahead of him there is always another dream castle glittering in the sun—and what fun it is to build foundations under it!*³⁶

Freed largely from expansion and growing pains, we can now pour many firm foundations under our dreams for the future.

And Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840), the Italian violinist! Why cannot we discover, train, and present many Paganinis and other such great artists? And shall we not here at BYU present before the musical world a pianist to excel in astonishing power of execution, depth of expression, and sublimity of noble feeling the noted Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt (1811–1886)? We have already produced some talented artists at the piano, but I have a secret hope to live long enough to come to the BYU auditorium and hear and see at the piano a greater performer than Ignacy Paderewski (1860–1941), the Polish statesman, composer, and pianist. Surely all Paderewskis were not born in Poland in the last century; all talented people with such outstanding re-creative originality, with such nervous power and such romantic appearance, were not concentrated in this one body and two hands! Certainly this noted pianist with his arduous super-brilliant career was not the last of such to be born!

The Italian painter and sculptor Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), with his masterful and wonderful technique, made his portraits, figures, and designs true to life. His *Mona Lisa* is celebrated, and in it he was striving to catch the fleeting manifestations of the secret soul of his attractive and winsome subject. He seems to have given inspiration to Raphael and others of the great.

On our last visit to Copenhagen, we were excited and inspired as we drank in the beauty of the series of statues of Christ and the twelve apostles by Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844). We wondered if anyone, anytime, could produce a greater masterpiece, and yet time and the BYU may surprise the world. Can you see statues on this campus of the Lord, His prophets, and His disciples? There are many of the martyrs and prophets of the centuries who have never been so honored.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) thought of himself only as a sculptor. He was called upon in 1505 by Pope Julius II to build a great monument which the pope desired to have finished within his lifetime. This monument was never completed, and the controversies which arose embittered a large part of the great artist's life. His three-thousand-five-hundred-square-foot painting in the Sistine Chapel is said to be the most important piece of mural painting of the modern world.

To be an artist means hard work and patience and long-suffering. This artist, Michelangelo, said, "I am a poor man and of little merit, who plod[s] along in the art which God gave me."³⁷ He also said, "I am more exhausted than man ever was."³⁸ And when we see Michelangelo's masterpieces of art, we feel, as did Habakkuk:

*Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.*³⁹

But then we ask, "Can there never be another Michelangelo?" Ah! Yes! His *David* in Florence and his *Moses* in Rome inspire adulation. Did all such talent run out in that early century? Could we not find an embodied talent like this but with a soul that was free from immorality and sensuality and intolerance?

Could there be among us embryo poets and novelists like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)? Have we explored as much as we should? Of the creator of *Faust*, Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The old Eternal Genius who built the world has confided himself more to this man than to any other."⁴⁰ But Goethe was not the greatest nor the last. There may be many Goethes among us even today waiting to be discovered. Inspired students will write great books and novels and biographies and plays.

Can we not find equal talent to those who gave us *A Man for All Seasons*, *Doctor Zhivago*, and *Ben-Hur*? This latter book I read when I was a small boy, and many times I have returned to it. Critics might not agree with me, but I feel that it is a great story. *My Fair Lady* and *The Sound of Music* and such have pleased their millions, but I believe we can improve on them.

We have the great Rembrandt (1606–1669), whose style is original—founded on the work of no other artist—and whose coloring is somber and reaches its highest achievement in combinations of browns and grays. There are few paintings about which so much has been written as Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* or his self-portraits. His morals also have been subject to criticism.

And we have the Italian painter Raphael (1483–1520), generally accepted in the European world as the greatest of religious painters.

It has been said that many of the great artists were perverts or moral degenerates. In spite of their immorality, they became great and celebrated artists. What could be the result if discovery were made of equal talent in men who were clean and free from the vices and thus entitled to revelations?

We have scientists who can help harness the limitless powers and turn them to good for all humanity. There have been Louis Pasteur (1822–1895) and Marie Curie (1867–1934) and Albert Einstein (1879–1955), and we have now Harvey Fletcher (1884–) and Henry Eyring (1901–), and there will be greater yet.

Then there is William Shakespeare (1564–1616). Everybody quotes Shakespeare. The English poet and dramatist was prodigious in his productions. His *Hamlet* and *Othello* and *King Lear* and *Macbeth* are only preludes to the great mass of his productions. Has anyone other ever been so versatile, so talented, or so remarkable in his art? And yet could the world produce only one Shakespeare?

The Lamanite-Nephite culture means much to the people of the Church, and properly so. Here at BYU, should we not have the greatest collection of artifacts, records, and writings concerning them in the world? Through revelation we have received much knowledge concerning these peoples. Should not BYU then be preeminent in this field of culture?

Perhaps growing up in a backwoods forest in Indiana or Louisiana or in Oregon or Illinois there may be some little deprived boy doing his elementary math on a wood-fire shovel and borrowing books from neighbors and splitting rails who will find his way tomorrow to the BYU, and here in the proper departments he will get the background, knowledge, and inspiration which will send him skyrocketing to fame and honors, perhaps even to the White House—a man to be ever after heralded for his wisdom, bravery, conscience, humanity, and leadership and to be quoted till eternity. His name might be Abraham, his mother's name might be Nancy, and could this be written concerning him as was written of his nineteenth-century counterpart at his birth (Abraham Lincoln, 1809–1865)?

*Poor Tom! Poor Nance!
Poor young one! born without a chance!*

...

*And—oh, well! send the women-folks to Nance.
Poor little devil! born without a chance!*⁴¹

The little Abes could have their chances and their greatest talents improved and perfected and their notoriety spring from humble but influential BYU.

Oh, how our world needs statesmen! And we ask again with George Bernard Shaw, “Why not?” We have the raw material, we have the facilities, and we can excel in training. We have the spiritual climate. We must train

statesmen, not demagogues—men of integrity, not weaklings who for a mess of pottage will sell their birthright. We must develop these precious youth to know the art of statesmanship, to know people and conditions, and to know situations and problems but also to be men who will be trained so thoroughly in the arts of their future work and in the basic honesties and integrities and spiritual concepts that there will be no compromise of principle.

For years I have been waiting for someone to do justice in recording in song and story and painting and sculpture the story of the Restoration, the reestablishment of the kingdom of God on earth with its struggles and frustrations and the apostasies and inner revolutions and counterrevolutions of those first decades; of the exodus to the West; of the counterreactions; of the transitions; of the persecution days; of the plural marriage and the underground; of the miracle man Joseph Smith, of whom we sing, “Oh, what rapture filled his bosom, For he saw the living God”;⁴² and of the giant colonizer and builder Brigham Young, by whom this university was organized and for whom it was named.

The story of Mormonism has never yet been written nor painted nor sculptured nor spoken. It remains for inspired hearts and talented fingers yet to reveal themselves. They must be faithful, inspired, active Church members to give life and feeling and true perspective to a subject so worthy. Such masterpieces should run for months in every movie center and cover every part of the globe in the tongue of the people, written by great artists and purified by the best critics.

Our writers and our moving-picture specialists, with the inspiration of heaven, should tomorrow be able to produce a masterpiece which would live forever. Our own talent, obsessed with dynamism from a *cause*, could put into such a story life and heartbeats and emotions and love and pathos, drama,

suffering, fear, and courage such as that of the great leader, the mighty modern Moses, who led a people farther than from Egypt to Jericho, who knew miracles as great as the stream from the rock at Horeb, manna in the desert, giant grapes, rain when needed, and battles won against great odds. And the great miracle prophet, the founder of this university, would never die.

Take a Nicodemus and put Joseph Smith's spirit in him, and what do you have? Take a da Vinci or a Michelangelo or a Shakespeare and give him a total knowledge of the plan of salvation of God and personal revelation and cleanse him, and then take a look at the statues he will carve and the murals he will paint and the masterpieces he will produce. Take a Handel with his purposeful effort, his superb talent, and his earnest desire to properly depict the story and give him inward vision of the whole true story and revelation, and what a master you have!

What a great university the BYU now is! A much greater one it can yet become! One of the rich rewards coming from doing great things is the capacity to do still greater things.

The architect Daniel H. Burnham (1846–1912) said:

*Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.*⁴³

The BYU must keep its vessel seaworthy. It must take out all old planks as they decay and put in new and stronger timber in their place. It must sail on and on and on.

And now may we suggest to you:

It is no time for loitering. There is no use in waiting for the future in the hope that everything will turn out all right. We must become engaged with it. . . . [Think] back to the sands of Dunkirk where three hundred thousand of our troops were hemmed in by enemy tanks. We had to get them off the beach. Hundreds of men who had motor boats and fishing boats and dinghies rushed to help. There was no time for pep talks or pampering; there were no charts. They were told [by the commanding officer]: "Now off you go and good luck to you—steer for the sound of the guns."⁴⁴

May God bless this great university and you and us and its impressive student body, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. "Behold! A Royal Army," *Hymns*, 1948, no. 7.
2. Articles of Faith 1:9.
3. 2 Corinthians 3:6.
4. Isaiah 57:20.
5. 3 Nephi 18:25.
6. Orison Swett Marden, *Pushing to the Front* (Petersburg, New York: Success Company, 1911), 21; quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Transcendentalist," lecture read at the Masonic Temple, Boston, January 1842.
7. "Is There a 'Sick' Society in the U.S.?: Riots, Crime, Youth Revolt," *U.S. News and World Report*, 28 August 1967, 49.
8. David O. McKay, "The Spiritual Life, the True Life of Man," *Instructor*, September 1967, 338.
9. "'Sick' Society," 51.
10. Heading in Robert A. Millikan, "Knowledge Is Power—Not Wisdom," *Rotarian* 66, no. 1 (January 1945): 7.
11. Millikan, "Knowledge Is Power," 7.
12. Brigham Young, "Remarks," *Deseret News*, 4 June 1873, 276; *JD* 16:77 (25 May 1873).
13. 1 Corinthians 15:44.
14. 1 Corinthians 2:11.
15. 1 Samuel 8:5.

16. 1 Samuel 8:7.
17. See 1 Samuel 8:11–18.
18. 1 Samuel 8:19–20.
19. 2 Nephi 9:29.
20. 1 Corinthians 13:1.
21. Brigham Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, 22 October 1862, 129; *JD* 9:369 (31 August 1862); text modernized.
22. John Taylor, “Discourse,” *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 1 June 1880, 1; *JD* 21:100 (13 April 1879).
23. Moses 1:39.
24. J. Reuben Clark Jr., “Charge to President Howard S. McDonald,” *Improvement Era*, January 1946, 63; from the address given at the inauguration of BYU president Howard S. McDonald, 14 November 1945.
25. Spencer W. Kimball, summarizing his letter to Stewart L. Udall, 25 May 1967; quoting Doctrine and Covenants 28:6.
26. John 17:14–16.
27. Ernest L. Wilkinson, BYU address to faculty and staff, 12 September 1966, 6.
28. Clark, “Charge to President Howard S. McDonald,” 60, 62.
29. Colossians 2:8.
30. Reinhard Maeser, quoting Brigham Young, in *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1928), 79.
31. Joel 2:28.
32. John Taylor, “Discourse,” *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 1 June 1880, 1; *JD* 21:100 (13 April 1879).
33. John Taylor, “Discourse,” *Deseret News*, 25 September 1878, 531; *JD* 20:47 (4 August 1878).
34. Brigham Young, “Instructions,” *Deseret News*, 15 July 1863, 17; *JD* 10:224 (April and May 1863).
35. George Bernard Shaw, “In the Beginning,” *Back to Methuselah* (1921), part 1, act 1.
36. “Keep Climbing,” *Nogales International*, 12 June 1937, 6; quoted by Dom Jae, in “Words of Wisdom,” *Observer* 5, no. 1 (October 1962): 2 (Gorham State Teachers College, Gorham, Maine).
37. Michelangelo Buonarroti, letter to Niccolò Martelli, 20 January 1542; in John Addington Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti: Based on Studies in the Archives of the Buonarroti Family at Florence*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons; London: Macmillan, 1911), 2:68.
38. Michelangelo Buonarroti, letter to his family, 24 July 1512; in Julian Klaczko, *Rome and the Renaissance: The Pontificate of Julius II*, trans. John Dennie (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1903), 344.
39. Habakkuk 1:5.
40. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Goethe; or, the Writer,” *Representative Men: Seven Lectures* (1850).
41. Edmund Vance Cooke, “Born Without a Chance (February 12, 1809)” (1920).
42. “Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning,” *Hymns*, 1948, no. 136.
43. Daniel H. Burnham, motto for city planners, 1907; quoted in Charles Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921), 2:147.
44. “Prospectus for Youth,” *Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter* 47, no. 4 (April 1966): 1; quoting Commander Eric Wharton, Small Boats Pool, Royal Navy, in Richard Collier, *The Sands of Dunkirk* (London: Collins, 1961), 155: “Now off you go and good luck to you—and steer for the sound of the guns.”