

## *“Brighter Until the Perfect Day”*

BRIAN TIMOTHY WRIGHT

Good afternoon, Elder Christofferson, President Samuelson, deans, faculty, fellow graduates, family, and guests.

Picture in your minds an image of the sun with its rays peeking over the mountains and the sky lit up like a fire. Few visions can surpass the beauty of this scene. In your mind’s eye, is this sun setting or rising?

Few moments in life are anticipated as much as graduation from college and the celebration of the hard work that was required. Few experiences can surpass the poignancy of this moment. Again, is your sun setting or rising? The difference between the two is important, since one gives way to darkness while the other leads to more light.

In the Doctrine and Covenants it is written:

*That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.*<sup>1</sup>

Truth is light. We need light in order to see, because it carries information from the world to our eyes.

If this time of commencement is to be the dawn of our future growth, we must seek out

opportunities to expand our knowledge. As a famous phrase states, “Education is not so much the filling of a bucket as the lighting of a fire.”<sup>2</sup> Fire, as a source of light, needs constant fueling to burn. From our education here we have learned that the real key to learning is the maintenance of this fire—the thirst for more light.

Just as the light of day requires a window to pass into our homes, the light of truth requires a conduit to pass into our souls. We have discovered here at Brigham Young University that the sciences, humanities, and arts are some of the many conduits that invite truth into our lives, because all things testify of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Light and knowledge may be acquired in two different ways. One way is to receive light by having others refer us to that knowledge; the second is to seek out conduits for this light on our own. Our education here at Brigham Young University has trained us to employ both of these methods.

While studying here, we have relied heavily on enlightened professors who have

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*Brian Timothy Wright spoke as the representative of his graduating class at BYU commencement on 22 April 2010.*

encouraged us—by shining example—to “seek . . . out of the best books words of wisdom.”<sup>4</sup>

As I have read great recommended works, such as Gogol’s *Dead Souls* or Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, the light of truth has reflected into my heart and expanded my soul.<sup>5</sup>

My mind has been ignited to such a point that my wife and I have placed a quote from Erasmus on our bulletin board: “When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes.”<sup>6</sup> This is also a feeling that most of us starving graduates have experienced at the beginning of each semester.

As we have pored over textbooks and other materials, our minds have been enlightened and our lives have grown brighter and brighter. This change was barely noticeable at the time, as we learned “line upon line, precept upon precept”<sup>7</sup>—just as darkness steadily turns into day with the gradual rising of the sun. Looking back now, we can notice the change in light, but we have not yet grown unto “the perfect day.”

From here we will need to discover our own individual ways of obtaining light through the second method I mentioned: our own experiences. It is hoped that our experiences here have prepared us well for this. A few years ago I made a personal goal to learn how to play the violin. Initially it seemed that instead of light I had discovered the purest conduit of pain for my roommates and family as I practiced. However, eventually it was a very rewarding experience, not only because it helped me to discover more light and creativity but also because the pretty girl I asked to help me had to grab my hand to teach me the vibrato technique. I must have been a pretty good student, because later she became my wife. One just never knows what conduits are being opened when we try new things.

Sparked by curiosity, we discover new conduits for light as we invest time in learning new skills. Additionally, just as the beauty of the surrounding world is expressed through varying wavelengths of light, our lives are

enriched when we seek out a balanced variety of knowledge.

Our use as instruments in the Lord’s hands depends on our ability to remain sharpened as we continually fill our lives with light, making this graduation the dawn of our future. The Lord has a work for us to do if we will extend our reach to it. Just as the sun’s light shoots across the vast distance of space and illuminates our planet, all truth shines forth from God, enlightening us as we seek for it. He has said:

*If your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.*<sup>8</sup>

He will help us in our quest for knowledge if we will—as we have done here at Brigham Young University—center our learning on Him.

While the sun may be setting on our time at BYU, it is only beginning to rise on our eternal development. This sunrise will ultimately give way to “the perfect day” if we continue to seek after light and truth.

Fellow graduates, congratulations—not only for what we are finishing but also for what we are all beginning.

#### Notes

1. D&C 50:24.

2. See Plutarch, “On Listening to Lectures,” 48 C, in vol. 1 of *Plutarch’s Moralia*, 16 vols., trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927), 257–59.

3. See Alma 30:44.

4. D&C 109:7.

5. See Alma 32.

6. See Desiderius Erasmus, letter to Jacob Batt (12 April 1500).

7. 2 Nephi 28:30.

8. D&C 88:67.