



Photograph by Edward Martin, ca. 1867

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## Brigham Young: A Disciple Indeed

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Today the word *hero* has been diminished because it has been confused with the term *celebrity*. Author James Bradley has noted that in previous generations, the word *hero* had real meaning, as opposed to the shallowness of celebrity status: “Celebrities seek fame. They take actions to get attention. Most often, the actions they take have no particular moral content. Heroes are heroes because they have risked something to help others. Their actions involve courage.”<sup>cxxii</sup> 1

The greatest accomplishment in life, as well as the highest achievement, is to be exalted “in the kingdom of God, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation” (D&C 6:13). True heroes, then, eternally speaking, are those with the moral fortitude and spirituality to lay hold on eternal life. True heroes are disciples of Jesus Christ who not only follow Him but lead others to do the same. “The thing which [is] of the most worth,” the Savior declared, is to “bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father” (D&C 16:6).

Church history and Doctrine and Covenants courses provide ample opportunities to teach students about real heroes: latter-day disciples of Christ. Preeminent among them is President Brigham Young.

President Young had undeviating faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a devoted disciple. True disciples, like Brigham Young, are followers of Christ in both word and action: “Jesus said to those who believed on him, If ye *continue in my word*, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31; emphasis added). “He that *receiveth* my law and *doeth it*, the same is my disciple” (D&C 41:5; emphasis added). We can find no better example of one who “received” and “continued” in Christ’s teachings than Brigham Young. He was a true disciple indeed, and his example can inspire our students to deepen their own discipleship.

### **The Teachings of President Young**

Significantly, the priesthood and Relief Society manuals introduced in 1998 during President Hinckley’s administration began with the teachings of Brigham Young.<sup>cxxiii</sup>2 Some striking similarities exist between Brigham Young and Gordon B. Hinckley. These two uncommon disciples have much in common:

- Both are temple builders.
- President Young built the Tabernacle. President Hinckley built the Conference Center.
- President Young reorganized the Quorum of the Twelve and put the priesthood in order. President Hinckley reorganized the Seventy and added additional quorums to it (fulfilling the description of the Seventy found in D&C 107:93–98).
- President Young was given responsibility to improve the presentation of the endowment in temples. So was President Hinckley.
- President Young presided over the Church when the train and the telegraph connected America coast to coast. President Hinckley has presided when the Internet and e-mail have come to connect us continent to continent.
- Wagons, handcarts, and the Mormon Trail west were used by Brigham Young in 1847 to lead the Saints into relative obscurity. That same trail in 1997, a reenactment of the trek, and President Hinckley’s willingness to meet with the media have helped bring the Church, as prophesied, out of obscurity (see D&C 1:30).

While visiting the National Archives in Washington, D.C., I noticed displayed on the wall, just a few feet from the Constitution of the United States, a letter praising Brigham Young for his outstanding leadership in colonizing the American West. I also saw a life-size marble monument of him (sculpted by his grandson, Mahonri M. Young) in the nation’s capitol building, and I have seen the heroic-size bronze statue of him that rests in the rotunda of the Utah state capitol building. All three portray President Young as a man of action and indomitable will. He was a remarkable leader with the “vision to see and faith to do, no matter how great the task or how difficult the obstacle.”<sup>cxxiv</sup>3

Brigham Young was known as the “Lion of the Lord.”<sup>cxxv</sup>4 He was a unique individual, as George Q. Cannon observed, “a man of extraordinary will and great firmness of purpose. He was prudent in counsel, and wise in action. No hesitation, no vacillation of purpose but great tenacity and firmness in carrying out his views of right. . . . His courage was wonderful; he never knew what it was to have moral fear. The only question in his mind was, is it right? When this was decided, he pressed forward to its accomplishment, and no obstacle could deter him.”<sup>cxxvi</sup>5

President Young possessed an extraordinary self-confidence born of faith in God.<sup>cxxvii</sup>6 After leading over sixty thousand people into the vast deserts of the West, he founded hundreds of cities, established universities (despite the fact that he had only eleven days of formal schooling), and created numerous farming, mining, economic, transportation, and communication systems. I admire President Young’s devotion to God and his determination to make things happen, but I

most especially admire the qualities of his character that reflected true discipleship. These traits mark all true disciples of our Savior.

### **True Disciples of Christ Receive the Words of Truth**

The ability to apply wise counsel is a key to a disciple's success and achievements. Brigham and his wife Miriam were seekers who were looking for the truth. They joined the Church after two years of intense study. He said he waited a little while because he wanted to apply his heart to the teachings, adding, "I wished time sufficient to prove all things for myself."<sup>cxviii</sup>7 "I could not more honestly and earnestly have prepared myself to go into eternity than I did to come into this Church; and when I had ripened everything in my mind, I drank it in, and not till then."<sup>cxix</sup>8 But once he joined, he never looked back, and he never regretted it: "In all my researches into the doctrine of Jesus, I have never found an error."<sup>xxx</sup>9

His conversion came from reasoned study and from the divine witness of the Spirit: "If all the talent, tact, wisdom and refinement of the world had been sent to me with the Book of Mormon and had declared in the most exalted of earthly eloquence the truth of it, undertaking to prove it by learning and worldly wisdom, they would have been to me like the smoke which arises, only to vanish away. But when I saw a man [Eleazer Miller] without eloquence, or talents for public speaking who could only say, 'I know by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of the Lord,' the Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminated my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality were before me. I was encircled by them, filled with them, and I knew for myself that the testimony was true."<sup>xxxi</sup>10

He gladly received all he could from the Prophet Joseph Smith: "An angel never watched [Joseph] closer than I did, and that is what has given me the knowledge I have today. I treasure it up, and ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, to help my memory when information is wanted."<sup>xxxii</sup>11 Brigham "hunger[ed] and thirst[ed] after righteousness," and he was filled with the Spirit (see 3 Nephi 12:6). He commented: "In my experience I never did let an opportunity pass of getting with the Prophet Joseph and of hearing him speak in public or in private, so that I might draw understanding from the fountain from which he spoke, . . . [and] such moments were more precious to me than all the wealth of the world. No matter how great my poverty—if I had to borrow meal to feed my wife and children, I never let an opportunity pass of learning what the Prophet had to impart. This is the secret of the success of your humble servant."<sup>xxxiii</sup>12

### **True Disciples Respond to Calls from the Lord**

All of us are faced with the challenge of setting priorities. For true disciples, the Lord is always the *first* priority, and He rearranges our other priorities according to His will. Brigham was called on to make numerous sacrifices to help build the kingdom of God.<sup>xxxiv</sup>13 His family often made great sacrifice so that Brigham could do what God had asked of him. After Brigham had served ten missions from 1832 to 1840, the Lord spoke to him these commending and consoling words: "My servant Brigham, it is no more required at your hand to leave your family as in times past, for your offering is acceptable to me. I have seen your labor and toil in journeyings for my name. I therefore command you to send my word abroad, and take especial care of your family from this time, henceforth and forever. Amen" (D&C 126:1–3).

Brigham had the courage to respond to calls even when they seemed impossible to fulfill. While contemplating how to build the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith asked the brethren if they knew of anyone who could help them undertake the difficult task. Joseph Young replied that he knew of a man named Artemus Millet who lived in Canada but who was not a member of the Church. Joseph turned to Brigham and said: "'Brother Brigham, I give you a mission. You are to go to Canada. You are to convert Artemus Millet. You are to bring him back to Kirtland with his

family and tell him to bring at least a thousand dollars in cash.’ It is a testament of the mettle of Brigham that he said, ‘All right, Brother Joseph, I’ll go.’”<sup>cxxxv</sup> 14

Such unhesitating response to calls was seemingly second nature to him. “Go he did. He did convert Artemus Millet and his family. They did come to Kirtland with the thousand dollars. Brother Millet oversaw the construction of that temple and later the Manti Temple.”<sup>cxxxvi</sup> 15 Brother Millet also trained Truman Angell, who later served as the architect for the magnificent Salt Lake Temple—the globally recognized symbol of the Latter-day Saints.

### **True Disciples Experience the Gifts of the Spirit**

President Young had the type of personality and presence that attracted people, but he was also charismatic in the sense of having power bestowed by the Holy Spirit. He experienced the gifts of the Spirit in his life. The Apostle Paul taught that spiritual gifts are the “earnest of our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:13–14). In other words, the gifts of the Spirit are given like a promissory note, or a down payment, so to speak, on all the eternal blessings God has covenanted that we will one day receive. The fact that spiritual gifts were so much a part of President Young’s life illustrates that the covenant was in force with him.

On 22 September 1827 (the same night Joseph Smith received the Book of Mormon plates from the angel Moroni at the Hill Cumorah), Brigham and his wife were living in Mendon, New York. They witnessed an unusual manifestation in the night sky. “The veil was taken from his eyes, and in the nighttime’s western sky, toward Cumorah, he saw a bright light. Calling his wife excitedly to his side, they watched in amazement as for two hours the shimmering light formed itself into marching armies.”<sup>cxxxvii</sup> 16 Heber C. Kimball and others had seen the same remarkable event, and he felt it signified that God was marshaling His forces and that an army of righteousness would now march forth.<sup>cxxxviii</sup> 17 But that night, all Brigham could do was marvel at the sign that had been given and ponder what might come to pass.

Brigham spoke in tongues the very day he met the Prophet Joseph Smith.<sup>cxxxix</sup> 18 This was apparently the first time the Prophet Joseph had heard someone speak in tongues. Only Joseph understood what was said. He later disclosed that Brigham had spoken in the pure Adamic language and had prophesied that he would one day succeed Joseph as the President of the Church. The Prophet Joseph stayed close to him from that moment on. Brigham Young experienced this same gift of tongues at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.<sup>cxl</sup> 19

While serving a mission in England, Brigham received an inspiration that saved the missionaries he presided over from harassment and embarrassment. He wrote: “I had organized the Priesthood in Manchester to meet every Sabbath morning, and distribute themselves throughout the different parts of the city to preach in the streets. In this way they occupied about forty preaching stations, at each one of which the congregation were notified of our regular meetings in the Carpenter’s Hall. This so annoyed the sectarians, particularly the Methodists, that they made complaints to the mayor, who issued an order to have all street preachers arrested. I went to the Priesthood meeting in the morning and felt impressed to tell the brethren to go home. The police, who had been instructed to arrest all street preachers that morning, took up about twenty, who all proved to be Methodists. When the magistrate learned they were not ‘Mormons,’ they were dismissed.”<sup>cxli</sup> 20

President Young had seen the Salt Lake Valley in vision long before he arrived with the first company of pioneers. In 1838, while the Saints were being driven from Missouri, Church leaders contemplated heading west. But Brigham saw in vision that the Saints were first to go east, settle temporarily, and then later travel toward the west.<sup>cxlii</sup> 21 Later, as the Saints prepared to leave Nauvoo, President Young had a dream in which he was shown the Salt Lake Valley and the hill

that became known as Ensign Peak. In his dream, the Prophet Joseph Smith stood atop Ensign Peak and showed him the valley below. Elder George A. Smith, Church historian and member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, described the experience:

We look around to-day and behold our city clothed with verdure and beautified with trees and flowers, with streams of water running in almost every direction, and the question is frequently asked, “How did you ever find this place?” I answer, we were led to it by the inspiration of God. After the death of Joseph Smith, when it seemed as if every trouble and calamity had come upon the Saints, Brigham Young, who was President of the Twelve, then the presiding Quorum of the Church, sought the Lord to know what they should do, and where they should lead the people for safety, and while they were fasting and praying daily on this subject, President Young had a vision of Joseph Smith, who showed him the mountain that we now call Ensign Peak, immediately north of Salt Lake City, and there was an ensign fell upon that peak, and Joseph said, “Build under the point where the colors fall and you will prosper and have peace.”<sup>cxliii</sup>22

When President Young saw the Salt Lake Valley for the first time, he received a divine manifestation that they had found the place designated by God for the Saints to live. Speaking at a 24th of July celebration years later, President Woodruff related: “I drove my carriage with President Young lying on a bed in it into the open valley, the rest of the company following. When we came out of the canyon into full view of the valley I turned the side of my carriage around, open to the west, and President Young arose [leaned up] from his bed and took a survey of the country. While gazing upon the scene before us, he was enraptured in vision for several minutes. *He had seen the valley before in vision and upon this occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and of Israel as they would be planted in the valleys of the mountains. When the vision had passed, [Brigham Young] said, ‘This is the right place, drive on.’*”<sup>cxliv</sup>23

Despite the bleak reports about the valley, Brigham prophesied that God had promised He “will temper the elements, . . . rebuke the frost and the sterility of the soil, and the land shall become fruitful.”<sup>cxlv</sup>24

Within a few days after the arrival of the first company of pioneers into the valley, President Young walked north of their encampment and suddenly “struck the point of his cane into the ground and exclaimed, ‘Here we will build the Temple of our God.’”<sup>cxlvi</sup>25 He later testified, “I have never looked upon that ground, but the vision of it was there. I see it as plainly as if it was in reality before me. Wait until it is done. I will say, however, that it will have six towers, to begin with, instead of one. Now do not any of you apostatize because it will have six towers, and Joseph only built one. It is easier for us to build sixteen, than it was for him to build one.” He also prophesied of other buildings, including one like the Conference Center: “The time will come when there will be one in the center of temples, we shall build, and, on the top, groves and fish ponds. But we shall not see them here, at present.”<sup>cxlvii</sup>26 With great interest, we can think about the recently completed Conference Center in light of President Young’s prophetic statement.

When asked by his daughter Susa Young Gates how the Saints could possibly accomplish all the temple work that needed to be done, Brigham replied that “there would be many inventors of labor-saving devices, so that our daily duties could be performed in a short time, leaving us more and more time for temple work. The inventions have come, and are still coming.”<sup>cxlviii</sup>27

**True Disciples Use God-Given Creativity to Bless Others**

Pioneers are those who go before and show the way. The Lord expects us to be “anxiously engaged” in good causes and to “do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27). Brigham was forward-thinking and experimental. He grew cotton, produced silk, made iron, and so forth. One story of his creative genius is how he received the inspiration for the design of the Tabernacle on Temple Square. In conversation with Henry Grow, a bridge-builder, President Young said: “Henry, I am desirous of constructing a building for our people, anticipating the future numbers, and I have been wondering what plan we should use. . . . I had an egg for breakfast this morning, cooked hard, and in lieu of chopping it through the center, I cut it through end-wise and set it up on tooth-picks. I was strongly impressed that we might use this plan for the building.”<sup>cxlix</sup>28

How many of us have ever used our breakfast as inspiration to create something great? President Young, apparently, was constantly using his creative ingenuity to improve life.

### **True Disciples Are Confident They Can Do What God Asks**

The U.S. minister to Berlin said of Brigham Young: “At first glance, you would take him to be a successful bank or railroad president, and his quick, straightforward, business-like manner carries out the impression. . . . I studied his face sufficiently to detect the three chief qualities—great prudence, great determination, and great belief in himself.”<sup>cli</sup>29

Another historian observed: “If I were asked to point out the principle thing, which, more than all others, made President [Brigham] Young the great man he was, I think I should reply, without hesitation, that it was his ability to believe—his great faith. First, faith in a living God. . . .

Second, faith in every principle and doctrine revealed and taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . Third, faith in himself, and in his ability to carry on the great work of establishing the Kingdom of God. . . . On his tombstone one might well have written, HE BELIEVED.”<sup>cli</sup>30

### **True Disciples Are Light-Hearted without Being Light-Minded**

President Young was famous in his time. Papers could write any lurid tale about him to sell their papers, whether it was true or not. He was living in a puritanical world during the reign of Queen Victoria in England. His life and marriages made interesting fodder for newspapers. Many people were curious to meet him.

Samuel Clemens, alias Mark Twain, met Brigham Young while traveling to California. He said Brigham was “quiet, kindly, easy-mannered, dignified, self-possessed old gentleman of fifty-five or sixty, and had a gentle craft [a twinkle] in his eye.” He added that he had a straw hat on and that President Young even teased him:

He talked about Utah, and the Indians, and Nevada, and general American matters and questions, with our secretary and certain government officials who came with us. But he never paid any attention to me, notwithstanding I made several attempts to ‘draw him out’ on federal politics and his highhanded attitude towards Congress. I thought some of the things I said were rather fine. But he merely looked around at me, at distant intervals, somewhat as I have seen a benignant old cat look around to see which kitten was meddling with her tail. By and by I subsided into an indignant silence, and so sat until the end, hot and flushed, and execrating him in my heart for an ignorant savage. But he was calm. His conversation with those gentlemen flowed on as sweetly and peacefully and musically as any summer brook. When the audience was ended and we were retiring from the presence, he put his hand on my head, beamed down on me in an admiring way, and said to my brother: “Ah—your child, I presume? Boy or girl?”<sup>cli</sup>31

On one occasion, President Young dictated a letter to a disgruntled sister who had asked her name to be removed from the records of the Church. His response is both humorous and instructive: “Madam: I have this day examined the records of baptism for the remission of sins in the Church . . . and not being able to find [your name] recorded therein I was saved the necessity of erasing your name therefrom. You may therefore consider that your sins have not been remitted you and you may consequently enjoy the benefits therefrom.”<sup>cliii</sup>32

He had a great sense of humor. He said, “One of the nicest things in the world is to let an enemy alone entirely . . . [because doing so] mortifies him to death.”<sup>cliv</sup>33

He set apart Henry G. Sherwood as the camp grumbler for the trek crossing the plains. He officially motioned that “any one who wants to murmur, go to Henry G. Sherwood, who will do the business for them.”<sup>clv</sup>34

When a woman complained to President Young that her husband had told her to go to hell, he replied, “Sister, don’t go, don’t go!”<sup>clvi</sup>35

Historians Richard and Jeni Holzapfel have noted that a pastime for young and old women in Nauvoo was to collect autographs and messages of advice in notebooks. In one book, Brigham Young left a very humorous entry. W. W. Phelps wrote:

Two things will beautify a youth,  
That is: Let *virtue* decorate the *truth*.  
And so you know; every little helps,  
Yours, W. W. Phelps.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, keying off of Phelps’s poem, wrote:

The truth and virtue both are good When rightly understood,  
But charity is better, Miss—  
*That* takes us home to bliss.  
And so forthwith  
Remember, Joseph Smith.”<sup>clvii</sup>36

And Brigham Young, “who was sometimes serious and at other times humorous in the messages he left in autograph books,” recorded:

To live with Saints in Heaven is bliss and glory,  
To live with Saints on Earth is another story.”<sup>clviii</sup>37

### **True Disciples Lead by Example**

President Young taught: “A man must first learn to rightly rule himself, before his knowledge can be fully brought to bear for the correct government of a family, a neighborhood or nation, over which it is his lot to preside.”<sup>clix</sup>38 He instructed the Saints: “It matters not whether you or I feel like praying; when the time comes to pray, *pray*. If we do not feel like it, we should pray until we do. . . . You will find that those who wait ’till the Spirit bids them pray will never pray much on this earth.”<sup>clx</sup>39

One of his wives, Lucy B. Young, described an incident reflecting how President Young followed his own counsel: “I went up the hall in the Lion House. President Young had just crossed the road on South Temple and hurried into his office. With the curiosity of a good woman, I walked up to the end of the hall and listened at the door. I heard President Brigham Young say: ‘Down on your knees, Brigham! Down on your knees!’ He had had some difficulty with the men across the street. In a few moments he opened the door calmly, with perfect control, and went about his work.”<sup>clxi</sup>40

President Young believed in teaching children by example. “It is not by the whip or the rod that we can make obedient children,” he stated, “but it is by faith and by prayer, and by setting a good

example before them.”<sup>clxii</sup>41 “When his sons were caught donating some props (without permission) for a play written by their friends, he said to the theater manager, “These boys will have a play. They call it “The Robbers of the Rocky Mountains.” I don’t know much about the mountains, but they made a clean job of my old barn. Give them a date at the Theater.”<sup>clxiii</sup>42

### **True Disciples Are Loyal to the Cause They Join**

President Young described his loyalty to God in various sermons. “I would rather have God my friend, and all the world enemies, than be a friend with the world, and have God my enemy.”<sup>clxiv</sup>43 “Whatever duty God places upon me, in his strength, I intend to fulfill it.”<sup>clxv</sup>44 “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord. As for me and all I have it is the Lord’s and shall be dedicated to him in all my days.”<sup>clxvi</sup>45

During the dark days of Kirtland, when apostasy ran even in the highest circles of Church leadership, Brigham Young’s unyielding firmness became a strength to other loyal Saints. He defended the Prophet Joseph Smith from apostates in the Kirtland Temple.<sup>clxvii</sup>46 The apostates became so incensed at Brigham Young that they threatened to destroy him. Their fury had become so fierce against Brigham he had to flee Kirtland, despite the fact that it was December, to save his life.

Later, after Governor Lilburn W. Boggs had issued his shameful extermination order, after the Saints had been mercilessly driven from Missouri, and while Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and others were still imprisoned in Missouri, Brigham Young faced the perilous decision of returning to Far West, Missouri, to fulfill a revelation. On 8 July 1838, before the Saints had fled Missouri, the Lord declared that the Twelve were to leave for a mission to England, from Far West, on the 26th of April 1839 (see D&C 118:4–5). Some suggested that the Lord would surely take the “will for the deed,” given their circumstances and having been threatened with death if they returned to Missouri. But not Brigham. In peril of his life, he obediently returned to Far West, leading twenty other Saints, and fulfilled the prophecy. He reported, “Thus was this revelation fulfilled, concerning which our enemies said, if all other revelations of Joseph Smith were fulfilled that one should not, as it had day and date to it.”<sup>clxviii</sup>47

### **True Disciples Combine the Practical with the Spiritual**

Brigham demonstrated the balance of how to blend the practical with the spiritual, along with the perspective of the eternal. He used the October 1856 general conference to organize teams and supplies to rescue the handcart pioneers who were stranded in the Wyoming snows. He said: “The afternoon meeting will be omitted, for I wish the sisters to go home and prepare to give those who have just arrived a mouthful of something to eat, and to wash them and nurse them up. You know I would give more for a dish of pudding and milk, or a baked potato and salt, were I in the situation of those persons who have just come in, than I would for all your prayers, though you were to stay here all the afternoon and pray. Prayer is good, but when baked potatoes and pudding and milk are needed, prayer will not supply their place.”<sup>clxix</sup>48

Speaking of that event, President Hinckley said:

I think President Young did not sleep that night. I think visions of those destitute, freezing, dying people paraded through his mind.

The next morning he came to the old Tabernacle which stood on this square. He said to the people:

“I will now give this people the subject and the text for the Elders who may speak. . . . It is this. . . . Many of our brethren and sisters are on the plains with handcarts, and probably many are now seven hundred miles from this place, and



they must be brought here, we must send assistance to them. The text will be, ‘to get them here.’ . . . I will tell you all that your faith, religion, and profession of religion, will never save one soul of you in the Celestial Kingdom of our God, unless you carry out just such principles as I am now teaching you. Go and bring in those people now on the plains.” . . .

Wonderful sermons have been preached from this pulpit, my brethren and sisters. But none has been more eloquent than that spoken by President Young in those circumstances.<sup>clxx49</sup>

Brigham’s practicality, combined with spirituality, was further illustrated when a woman who was ill asked him for a blessing. President Young said, “Have you taken any herbs?” She replied, “Oh, no, Brother Brigham, I have the faith that if you just lay your hands upon my head I won’t need any herbs or any medicine.” He responded by pointing to a vacant lot and said, “You might just as well expect the Lord to cause wheat and corn to grow on that bare ground without you ever plowing or planting as to expect the Lord to do something for you that you know what to do for yourself without you putting first the effort.” “But,” he added, “I have the faith that if we were traveling in the mountains and all we could get was a little venison and we had some ailment then we could ask the Lord to do everything because there was nothing we could do for ourselves. And it is my faith that he could and would perform a miracle in our behalf.”<sup>clxxi50</sup>

### **Brigham Young’s Life Shows Us the Path of Discipleship**

Examples from the life of President Young such as those discussed above illustrate his undeviating faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, his devotion to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his loyalty to the kingdom of God. He was a fervent disciple whose devotion never faltered. In a 1947 tribute to Brigham Young and the sacrifices of the pioneers he led, Vilate C. Raile wrote:

They cut desire into short lengths  
And fed it to the hungry fires of courage.  
Long after when the fires had died,  
Molten gold gleamed in the ashes.  
They gathered it in bruised palms  
And handed it to their children  
And their children’s children forever.<sup>clxxii51</sup>

When we consider the sacrifices that Brigham Young and other pioneer forebears made, we might wonder if we have ever done anything to be worthy to sit with them in the future eternities. Elder Neal A. Maxwell has responded, “If you are faithful, the day will come when those deserving pioneers whom you rightly praise for having overcome the adversities in their wilderness trek will instead praise you for having made your way successfully through a desert of despair, for having passed through a cultural wilderness and having kept the faith, for having been true to the faith.”<sup>clxxiii52</sup> “Therefore, though we have rightly applauded our ancestors for their spiritual achievements (and do not and must not discount them now), those of us who prevail today will have done no small thing. The special spirits who have been reserved to live in this time of challenges and who overcome will one day be praised for their stamina by those who pulled handcarts.”<sup>clxxiv53</sup>

May God bless us to treasure the “molten gold”—the legacy of discipleship—that Brigham Young “gathered . . . in bruised palms” and has passed to all of us. Truly, he was a disciple of Jesus Christ indeed, leaving footsteps of faith for other disciples to follow.

### **Notes**

1. James Bradley, *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000), 260.

2. Brigham expressed an opinion on countless subjects. The register alone for Brigham Young's papers occupies seventy-seven single-spaced pages. Materials classified include "approximately 150 boxes of . . . materials, including twenty-nine letterpress copy books with exact replicas of about 30,000 letters he had dictated and signed; forty-eight volumes [thick, handwritten histories, containing] about 50,000 pages of a manuscript chronicle of his daily doings as president of the church; four diaries written mostly in his own hand during the years 1837 to 1844; ten diaries dictated by him, 1846–77, but in the hands of his private secretary; and thousands of pages of office journals, correspondence, published and unpublished speeches, ledgers, and telegram books" (Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998], 113–14).
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, quoted in "Brigham Young 200th Birthday," *LDS Church News*, 24 May 2001.
4. W. W. Phelps, *Deseret News*, March 1851; quoted in W. D. Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps—Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, August 1958), 68.
5. George Q. Cannon, *Juvenile Instructor* 12 (15 September 1877): 210.
6. See Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1970), 83–84.
7. *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 3:91.
8. *Journal of Discourses*, 8:38.
9. *Journal of Discourses*, 13:270–71.
10. In Nibley, *Brigham Young*, 6.
11. Brigham Young Papers, 8 October 1866 sermon; quoted in Henry B. Eyring, ed., *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 15–16.
12. *Journal of Discourses*, 12:269–70.
13. See *Journal of Discourses*, 4:34–35, where President Young described some of the sacrifices he made while serving missions for the Church.
14. See Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 58.
15. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, 58.
16. Unpublished minutes of the Young-Richards Family Meeting, Nauvoo, 18 January 1845, quoted in the CES student manual, *Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 63.
17. See Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball: An Apostle—The Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945), 16.
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27. Archibald F. Bennett, “Put On Thy Strength, O Zion!” *Improvement Era*, October 1952, 720.
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Painting by Arnold Friberg, *Captain Moroni and the Title of Liberty*

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## Captain Moroni's Wartime Strategies: An Application for the Spiritual Battles of our Day

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As Mormon abridged the Nephite record, he included what he deemed most relevant for latter-day Israel, including stories of war. The so-called “war chapters” provide a rich resource of modern-day spiritual applications for teachers and students of the gospel (see Alma 43–62). One way to apply these chapters is to draw a parallel between the physical and the spiritual—between Moroni’s physical battles on the field and the spiritual battles that we face in our own lives today. To be more specific, we might ask these questions: (1) What *strategies* did Captain Moroni use to prepare and protect himself and his people from evil men such as Zerahemnah, Amalickiah, and Ammoron? (2) How can these strategies be implemented to build spiritual defenses of our own against Satan and the evil of our day?

Of course, we could identify numerous strategies; however, we will focus our attention on just five. First, Captain Moroni equipped those in his military with personal armor that shielded the “more vital parts of the body” (Alma 43:38). Second, Moroni extended the boundary of defense