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## Statehood in a Decade of Compromise

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*President Cannon [proposed] a plan of teaching religion to our children on each day in the week.*

—General Church Board of Education<sup>1</sup>

The 1890s brought a new era to Utah and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Historian Thomas G. Alexander typified the attitude of the earlier era as “apocalyptic belligerency,”<sup>2</sup> a period of resentment and isolation, of suspicion and resistance to the larger society. This attitude had to succumb to accommodation and cooperation. Utah would finally be granted statehood, but only if it adopted the social norms of the larger society and the legal requirements of the US government. In everything from its economic policies to its domestic relationships, Utah was expected to conform to the rest of the nation; its survival required compromise. The question the Church faced was no longer whether or not they would compromise with the world, but rather how much compromise was too much. This transition had a huge impact on nearly every part of life in the territory, including the way education was viewed and conducted—and Maeser was right in the middle of the transition. Maeser met this new period with a cautious optimism. He carried a keen memory of past animosity shown the Church and a practical understanding of the realities of a new era of political compromise.

## Public Education and Church Schools

The ideal of a separate system of education grounded in Latter-day Saint doctrine was challenged by the legal requirement to develop common schools devoid of religious preferences. The larger culture had rapidly adopted an epistemological view that presumed knowledge could be appropriately compartmentalized into two distinct realms: the religious and the secular. This position was reinforced by interpretations of the First Amendment of the US Constitution that barred the government from either establishing religion or prohibiting the free exercise of it. Legal neutrality toward religion (a separation of church and state) was therefore required of state-sponsored common schools. Many therefore supposed that public schools should limit their instruction strictly to religiously neutral, secular knowledge, allowing churches and families to supplement this education with the religious knowledge of their choice.

This philosophical compartmentalization of knowledge, however, was not consistent with Latter-day Saint doctrine, which held that all things are spiritual unto God and should be so unto man (see D&C 29:34). Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor had explicitly claimed that all truth comes from God and is inherently religious. Therefore, adopting the typical standards of the common school would be contradicting that doctrine, at least by implication; knowledge was not religiously neutral for these Church leaders, and separating church from state should not require separating God from truth.

Maeser expressed his concerns about the national trends in education at the first annual Church School Convention in 1889.<sup>3</sup> He claimed that the establishment of the Church school system was the direct result of the defects in the educational system in vogue in the United States. Maeser elaborated, “Evil results accrue from the practice of excluding Deity from text books and school rooms, and thus tacitly encouraging a feeling of infidelity, which is rapidly growing among the youth of this land. That system of godless education has proven unsatisfactory, and we will have none of it.” At the same meeting, President Wilford Woodruff confirmed Maeser’s concerns, and President George Q. Cannon added, “We must give our



*In the 1890s, great efforts were being made not only to eliminate denominational control of schools but to remove all religion from education. This cartoon portrays the walls built to protect the Constitution and public schools from religious influences. The title of the cartoon reads “The Attack on Our Outer Ramparts.—First the House of Refuge—then the Public Schools—then—the Constitution!” Cartoon in Puck magazine, April 22, 1885, courtesy of Library of Congress.*

children a religious education in addition to the secular one, for although infidelity is not directly taught in the public schools its spirit is fostered by the exclusion of religious education.”<sup>4</sup>

The Church academies, therefore, were to be much more than simply a secular institution with required religious instruction. The gospel was to be integrated into the learning of all subjects. Maeser wrote a brief history of BYA that was published on the day they moved into the new academy building. In it, he reiterated that the academy was the result of prophetic instruction: “The necessity of the establishment of a new kind of educational institution for Zion had been revealed by the Lord to the Prophet Brigham Young.” Maeser then asked what element was lacking in other institutions that created this necessity. Other institutions had much better financial conditions, and teachers with “professional efficiency” and “much science, much art, much skill, and much so-called civilization.” Maeser believed, however, that so much emphasis had been placed on those issues “that this generation is fast getting into the notion that they

can get along without a God, like the Titans of old.”<sup>5</sup> The nucleus of the new system Brigham Young proposed was succinctly stated in his injunction that “neither the alphabet nor the multiplication table should be taught without the Spirit of God.” This focus on the Spirit was the “golden thread” that was woven into the ever-changing scenes of development which the BY Academy has passed through and that strengthened the school through the adversities and trials it was forced to endure. Maeser’s article concluded by insisting that Brigham Young’s charge must remain “the mainspring of all her labors” in the future.<sup>6</sup>

Maeser’s opposition to the educational trends in public schools was not limited, however, to the secularization he observed, he was also concerned about the way the government tended to impose itself in opposition to personal choice. He believed the state had shown itself particularly inept at fostering proper individual growth. With a keen memory of the oppressive tactics imposed upon teachers and citizens in Saxony, Maeser warned that society, through “state-craft,” legislation, and “the pressure of public opinion, has been gradually widening the field, regulating and systematizing what was left before to individual enterprise.” For him, “socialism,” especially when combined with “infidelity,” was particularly destructive: “As its ultimate consequences, Socialism would absorb all the chances for individual self-activity, and combine them into one huge crystallization of society; a tyranny in comparison with which the reign of a Nero or of a Genghis Khan would be a paradise. Socialism and its twin brother, infidelity, are engaged in a work of destruction. Destruction of faith in the certainty of heaven leads to destruction of faith in the divinity of man.”<sup>7</sup>

Maeser was suggesting that, no matter how much ancient tyrants might have wanted to control their subjects, in many ways they allowed them greater freedom than modern socialism does. Modern socialist efforts tend to minutely measure, monitor and control individual behavior in ways completely inconceivable by ancient tyrannical regimes.<sup>8</sup> Throughout Maeser’s career, he opposed all sources of tyranny or individual oppression. In education this type of oppressive socialism was demonstrated particularly well in school systems that oppressively squelch

individual growth by imposing common requirements on all and by teaching, in practice, that God is irrelevant to learning by leaving Him totally out of the discussion. Maeser warned that the application of the coercive measures of government to secularize schools, if unchecked, would prove disastrous, and greater control of the curriculum by the state would inevitably lead to a denial of man's divine potential.

## The Development of Religion Classes

Of course, the Church school system was a direct response to the problems seemingly inherent in a state-controlled, secular public educational system. Church leaders believed that the "godless" presuppositions of such an education would encourage infidelity, at least by implication. At the same time, however, Church leaders also recognized it was not realistic to suppose that every child in the Church would be able to participate in a Church academy. The Church responded in two practical ways. First, they continued to prepare as many teachers as practical for both Church and district schools and to encourage the members to support the Church schools wherever it was possible. Second, in order to overcome the inadvertent message in secular schools that God is irrelevant to

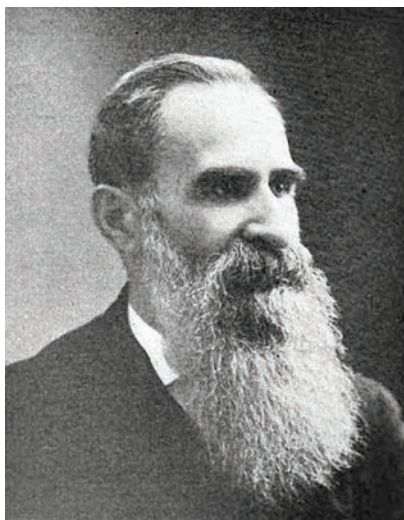


*Religion class in Springville, Utah. Each ward in the Church was invited to create a religion class to supplement public school education. Photo by G. E. Anderson.*

knowledge, they proposed the establishment of Church-sponsored religion classes.

Complete withdrawal of Latter-day Saint teachers from the public system would only heighten the impact of those public school teachers, not of the faith, who might seek to dissuade children from their religion. President Anthon H. Lund raised the point “that in a majority of cases the district schools are under the direction of those of our own faith, and no influence contrary to our faith will be felt,”<sup>10</sup> hence the need to prepare Latter-day Saint teachers for the district schools.

District schools were not to teach religion, but the church believed every Latter-day Saint child unable to attend the integrated experience of a Latter-day Saint school should have access to a religious education. In the June 1890 General Church Board of Education meeting, President Lund proposed “the holding of theological classes in some separate building in the afternoon after the session of the dis-



*George Reynolds (1842–1909) was a secretary to the First Presidency of the Church until his death. He also served as the secretary to the Church Board of Education while Maeser was superintendent. Published in Improvement Era, September 1909, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*

trict schools in places where it was not convenient nor consistent at present to open church schools.”<sup>11</sup> In the October 8, 1890, meeting of the Church Board of Education, President Cannon proposed that Maeser (as superintendent of Church schools) and George Reynolds (as the board secretary) “get up a plan of teaching religion to our children on each day in the week or one day of the week.”<sup>12</sup> The motion was unanimously approved.

Maeser later wrote, “The Religion classes as a supplement and offset to the secularization of our district schools have become

a necessity in those Stakes of Zion or Bishop's Wards, where the schools are in the hands of the opponents to the Latter-day Work." Weekly church meetings or even textbooks written by faithful Latter-day Saints "would prove too feeble bulwarks against the flood of evil influences bearing down upon our children during the whole week in school, directed by, in many cases, professionally efficient teachers, but opposed to our faith."<sup>13</sup>

Maeser and Reynolds proposed that every ward in the Church that had children attending district schools should organize a religion class for them. They were to be taught, primarily after regular school hours, by faithful members of the Church to supplement the secular education of the public schools. According to Cannon, the purpose of the religion class was to "counteract the tendency of the district schools to win the children from religion . . . Unless pains are taken to counteract this tendency, a great many will lose all liking for religious principles, and become alienated in their feelings toward the Gospel."<sup>14</sup>

Much of the October 1891 Church School Convention was devoted to the development of church-sponsored religion classes. By June 1892, it was announced that 112 religion classes had been functioning in nineteen stakes. Maeser expressed disappointment that there weren't even more. He believed that the Sunday Schools, Primary, and Improvement Associations were insufficient to stem "the flood of iniquity sweeping over our land"; hence, he explained, "every child must be reached; and the religion classes will be a most effective means of accomplishing this end."<sup>15</sup>

## **The Manifesto, Statehood, and Public Schools**

Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto declaring the end of plural marriage in 1890 was the most significant event in establishing the new era in attitude regarding Utah and its impact was felt almost immediately. Plural marriage had been the biggest barrier to Utah's numerous applications for statehood. When the antipolygamy laws were upheld by the US Supreme Court, the Church had lost its last appeal. Church property that had been seized could then be sold for the use of public schools. In anticipation of this possibility, the territorial legislation passed Utah's first free public

school law in 1890. This act put even more pressure on the Church to produce both as many public school teachers without an anti-Mormon bias as possible, and to provide a sufficient number of religion classes for those unable to attend Church academies.

With the major barrier now removed, new legislation could be proposed for Utah's statehood. The Congress would be looking for evidence of Utah's desire to show its allegiance to the Country. Supporting public education was viewed as an important way to show such evidence. Always astute to political issues, at the June 1891 meeting of the Church General Board of Education, President Cannon expressed his concerns about placing too much of a burden on Church members to provide their own system of education for every grade level. He said, "The district schools must be patronized by the Latter-day Saints, for many reasons" and supposed that Latter-day Saint children could be trained in public schools up to their twelfth year "without endangering their faith." Claiming "that there shall be no rivalry between the Church Schools and the district schools," this arrangement would give the Church's political "traducers" less evidence to accuse them of opposing education.<sup>16</sup> Cannon and others began suggesting that it would be more practical for the Church schools to concentrate on the more "advanced studies" and "let the children of tender age attend the District Schools."<sup>17</sup> Of course, he also believed that such nonsectarian public education should be supplemented with daily religious instruction.<sup>18</sup>

## **Maeser's Educational Work**

Until 1892, Maeser continued to wear two full-time hats as superintendent of Church schools and principal of Brigham Young Academy. Maeser's retirement from BYA, however, was hardly a retirement; it was a full-time shift to superintendent. After installing Willard Done as the new principal of the LDS College, Maeser took a circuit tour to Juab, Millard, Emery, Sanpete, and Sevier Stakes, returning at the end of February 1892. Upon his return, Maeser was surprised by a retirement party for him, sponsored by BYA. A resolution was presented to



him declaring that “the Academic ship of true education was launched upon the great ocean-mission of earth-life, with theology and the voice of revelation and inspiration for its foundation, theology for its organization, theology for its management, theology for its constant work and theology for its results.”<sup>19</sup>

The next day, March 3, a special banquet was held in Maeser’s honor at the Templeton Hotel in Salt Lake. Testimonial addresses were given by Lorenzo Snow, James E. Talmage, Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, Franklin D. Richards, L. John Nuttall, and Willard Done. Maeser felt overwhelmed by the honor given him by “the wisest and best men that God has on earth,” but stated, “I have simply tried very hard to do my duty, as God marked it out through His servants from one day to another. . . . Hence I could not claim any credit.” He continued: “The day after the dedication of the Brigham Young Academy building, President Woodruff told me that the Lord had accepted of my labors, I told President Woodruff that I would not take all the riches in the world for that knowledge. . . . I feel that my salvation will depend upon my training the sons and daughters of Zion given into my hands in the testimony of Jesus Christ and of the great Latter-day work; this is the foundation stone of our education.”<sup>20</sup>

By 1892, then, Maeser was turning the work of Brigham Young Academy over to Benjamin Cluff, supervising all the Church schools, writing the curriculum for the religion classes throughout the Church, and encouraging the development of the territorial district schools. He was also supervising the preparation and examination of teachers for all three approaches to education: Church schools with an integrated religious curriculum; Church-sponsored religion classes that would supplement the nonsectarian public school curriculum; and district schools that, without promoting infidelity, would respect the state requirement for nondenominational instruction. Maeser’s support for these different approaches was grounded in his conviction that he had been called of God to foster education in Zion in every possible way. Accommodating and supporting two competing models of education seemed a necessary compromise for the progress of both Church and state.

## Shifts in Public Opinion and the Summer Teachers' Institute

The next few months were quite eventful. Friendships with people outside the Territory had not been typical in the previous era, but Utah students going east piqued the curiosity of some of the nation's most prominent educators. In March 1892, for example, Charles Eliot, president of Harvard, visited BYA and lectured to more than seven thousand people in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.<sup>21</sup> He had been impressed with the young men who had come east to study there and wanted to know more about Salt Lake. In his speech, Eliot compared the Utah pioneers with the pilgrims of Massachusetts, praising them for their industry and accomplishments. He was also quite impressed with the reception he had been given and the progress the Saints had made.<sup>22</sup> Eliot's visit was unusually positive; Mormons were hardly acquainted with visitors who were not typified by suspicion or animosity.

Likewise, as the animosity with outsiders diminished, Maeser saw potential danger in the flattery of worldly prominence. From June 13 through 17, Maeser was asked to present a series of lectures each evening in the Salt Lake Assembly Hall for the Deseret Sunday School Union. The lectures were recorded in the *Deseret News* and later published as a teacher preparation course for Sunday School teachers. They contained great insight and practical suggestions for teachers in the Church. He also expressed his concerns regarding "worldly" influences. He taught that Sunday schools were organized to help families offset the "flood of infidelity, of evil influence, crowding upon us, bearing heavily upon the youth from every side. . . . From Monday morning to Friday night, thirty hours in a week, these children are in a dangerous influence, in many instances one that is opposed to our faith."<sup>23</sup>

Under Benjamin Cluff's leadership, the 1892 Summer Institute at BYA began in August as usual, but this year started a new trend consistent with the new era in Church history. In previous teacher institutes, Maeser had brought the teachers of Utah together to receive training from the most experienced teachers in the Church (especially from BYA).



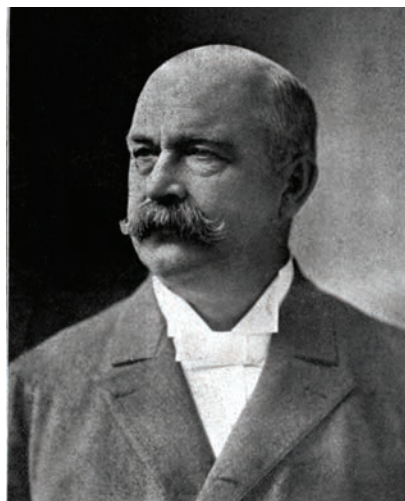
*Benjamin Cluff attended the University of Michigan in 1886, eventually completing a master's degree. Maeser approved of Cluff's desire to study there but was concerned that too many young men were going east spiritually unprepared. Photographer unknown, ca. 1900–1915, courtesy of Library of Congress.*

Cluff's intention for the Summer Institute was to invite the most respected national educators in the country to teach side by side with the Church educators for the betterment of all and to strengthen the Church's reputation outside of Utah. Maeser had been suspicious of education from the east; Cluff venerated it.

In his studies at Michigan and his later travels in the East, Cluff had made the acquaintance of a number of highly respected educators. In 1892, Cluff invited Colonel Francis Parker—principal of the Cook County Normal School in Chicago and one of the founders of the progressive education movement in the United States—and his wife to participate in the Summer Institute by presenting a number of lectures in August. This institute attracted four hundred attendants,<sup>24</sup> many more than it could easily accommodate, and the colonel did not disappoint his audience. Parker's lectures were energetic and entertaining.

He was surprised by both the reception he was given and the progressive nature of the educators he met in Utah. In fact, the ideas Parker presented, many of which he learned by traveling to Germany, were not entirely new to the Territory—Maeser had been advocating them for decades.

At a special reception for him in the unfinished Provo Tabernacle on August 3, Parker exclaimed, “I have met with hundreds of teachers’ institutes, but I never before met so earnest and persistent a crowd of teachers.” Maeser participated in the



*Francis Parker (1837–1902) has been called the founder of progressive education in the United States. He was invited to teach at the Brigham Young Academy with Maeser during the Summer Teachers’ Institute in 1892. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*

institute teaching a number of sessions and attended the reception, where he was asked to make a few remarks. He told of the challenges of beginning an educational system in the Territory and the struggles the academies had endured financially—for instance, how teachers used wheelbarrows to collect their salary in produce. When Maeser called out, “I know you teachers; how many of you have been my students!” this ignited such a thundering outburst of applause that it “fairly made the Tabernacle shake.”<sup>25</sup> Colonel Parker then returned to the podium; he embraced “the Grand old man” and in a husky voice expressed that he was glad if he could be helpful at the institute but had nothing more to add that evening, exclaiming that, “in the presence of Dr. Maeser, he must take his seat. Dr. Maeser had done a greater work.”<sup>26</sup> Later, in a letter to Maeser, Parker wrote, “I assure you again, that I never was more surprised and astonished in my association with you and your people. The earnestness and zeal of the teachers was very delightful to us both.”<sup>27</sup>

## The Beginnings of the Church University

Church leaders generally welcomed these educators from the east as visitors and many even attended their lectures, but most were far less confident about sending Latter-day Saint young people east to receive higher education. Maeser expressed his concerns that eastern universities were quickly adopting secular assumptions and thus he wished to stem the “pernicious annual exodus of our young people”<sup>28</sup> seeking higher education in the East. Other Church leaders also shared this concern. As early as April 1889, President Cannon had expressed the hope “to establish at least one of our schools on such a plan as to obviate the necessity of our young men going East to complete their education.”<sup>29</sup> In May of 1890, President Woodruff wrote to US Army captain Willard Young, Brigham’s son, asking him to resign his commission in the military and return to Utah to become president of a new Church university.<sup>30</sup>

In September 1890, the *Deseret News*, in an article promoting the reopening of the LDS College, wrote: “We expect to see a central Church college erected in this city, to which pupils will come from the most advanced schools in the Territory, to complete their education and from which they may graduate with the highest university honors.”<sup>31</sup> Apparently, newspapers in Logan and Provo had argued that Salt Lake would not be an appropriate place for such an institution.<sup>32</sup> At the December 1890 General Board of Education meeting, Willard Young reported that he was purchasing land for the Church’s university, calling it the “Young University.” At the June Convention of Church Schools in 1891, President Cannon announced, “It is to be hoped that the Church University will soon be established, so that it will not be necessary for any of our young men to go away from home to master the higher branches.”<sup>33</sup> So it was not a surprise when, in January 1892, the *Deseret News* announced the intention to make Young University “a high class university, second to none in the west” and reported that James E. Talmage was to be released as the principal of the LDS College in order to develop the science courses for the new institution.<sup>34</sup>

At the April 1892 general conference of the Church, a sustaining vote was given for the “founding and endowing of a Church University” to be named “the University of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (later the name was shortened to “Church University”).<sup>35</sup> Willard Young was identified as the university’s president, with George Q. Cannon as the chairman of the board. Maeser was appointed to the organizing committee.

At the June Convention of Church Schools, Maeser endorsed the need for the Church University. He had personally known many young men who had gone east to study “who were but ill prepared and as a result some had lost their faith. Even one soul is too great a price to pay for the science which the world could give.”<sup>36</sup> Following the convention, Talmage was assigned to travel to the eastern United States to gather supplies and make proper preparations for the new Church University.

Maeser’s life as superintendent continued to be hectic. After speaking at the October 1892 General Sunday School Conference, Maeser went south for a fifty-day educational tour. He visited the Church schools in Arizona and then traveled to Mexico, where he helped establish schools in Colonia Díaz, Colonia Dublán, and Colonia Juárez. On the return trip, he traveled through California, attending church services in Oakland and San Francisco before returning home by train.<sup>37</sup>

## **Financial Panic and the End of Isolation**

Eighteen ninety-three marked the end of Utah’s financial isolation. The country had overexpanded its railway system and was set for an economic depression. In February, the Philadelphia and Reading Railway went bankrupt, and in May another run on the banks triggered a chain of events that sent the stock market crashing. As a result, banks failed, most of the railroads and many major companies went bankrupt, and the unemployment rate spiked. Over fifteen thousand companies and five hundred banks failed, robbing people of life savings, thousands of homes and farms, and employment opportunities. The West was hit especially hard by this depression and, as historian Ronald W. Walker demonstrated, Utah learned dramatically how “the premises of economic independence and

isolation upon which it had been founded fifty years earlier were now untenable. By the time the crisis had run its course in 1898, Latter-day Saints would change their church's public image as well as their own attitude toward the outside financial world."<sup>38</sup>

The Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 amplified the impact of the depression on the Church and its members and making the Church "virtually defenseless before the coming panic."<sup>39</sup> A young Heber J. Grant played a critical role in saving the Church financially by traveling to New York and negotiating with some of the major banks. The result was not only a temporary break from Brigham Young's position of self-sufficiency and independence from the world, but the New York loans that Grant arranged "wrapped the cords of American finance tightly around Utah's Zion."<sup>40</sup> This brought a major change in the Church's attitude toward American capitalism and greatly increased its familiarity with it.

While the Church and the nation were struggling through this severe depression, Maeser was faithfully attempting to keep the Church Educational System afloat. In order to fund his regular circuit visits, he



*The run on the Farmers and Mechanics Savings Bank in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 19, 1893. The depression that followed was financially devastating for the entire country. This brought the Church and the academies to the brink of bankruptcy. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

had to request contributions in advance from the stakes to be visited. At the BYA board meeting, Abraham O. Smoot declared that there was no conceivable way for the school to survive without emergency help from the Church. The Church, however, was hardly in a position to offer anything. In Maeser's report to President Woodruff upon his return from his trip south, he noted the great work BYA was doing with over nine hundred students and twenty-three teachers, but lamented that the board "finds itself drifting irresistibly toward financial breakers, that threaten a catastrophe too serious in its results . . . [for] any lover of our youth."<sup>41</sup> When the First National Bank of Provo failed in 1893, some blamed BYA. A rumor also spread that the Catholics were seeking to acquire the BYA building.<sup>42</sup> Other Church schools were similarly struggling. At the meeting of the Church General Board of Education on August 11, it was announced that the schools in Morgan, Millard, Panguitch, Mt. Pleasant, and Manti were closing and that six others were requesting immediate aid. The board voted to shorten the school year if needed and decided to postpone the opening of the Church University in the fall.<sup>43</sup>

## **Summer Teachers' Institute**

Under Cluff's direction, the Summer Teachers' Institute at BYA in August 1893 went forward as if there were no financial problems, boasting of between four and six hundred participants. Dr. Joseph Baldwin, a well-known Normal School psychologist from the University of Texas, and two more teachers from the Cook Normal School (Zonia Baber and Flora J. Cooke) were the featured lecturers. Baldwin spoke on the principles of psychology, encouraging the application of progressive educational techniques. He taught, "all education is self effort . . . You might as well eat a pupil's dinner for him as to attempt to do his work for him . . . Lead learners to find out, tell and do for themselves."<sup>44</sup> That Sunday evening, Baldwin spoke at a special fireside meeting in the Provo Tabernacle. His topic was happiness, suggesting, "the great teacher of happiness is Jesus," who laid ten stones to help individuals attain it. He then analyzed Jesus'



beatitudes, concluding, "if all is well within you, you can be happy in a prison cell."<sup>45</sup>

During the first week of the summer institute, Maeser made only a brief appearance;<sup>46</sup> on Monday of the second week the institute expanded to include the Church School Convention, over which Maeser presided. At the convention, Maeser had to inform the principals of the struggling Church schools that no financial appropriations would be available from the Church in 1893. He knew that a number of the academies had reported that because of the hard times they would need to suspend operations without help from Salt Lake, but he insisted "it would be a calamity for any Stake to have its Academy suspend operation, if even only for a season."<sup>47</sup> He pled for total unity of purpose, uniformity in most school policies, and great variety in methods and approaches. At the conclusion of Maeser's address, Cluff proposed a motion in support of Maeser's plea.<sup>48</sup> He also spoke at least two more times during the concluding week of the institute.

On the Wednesday afternoon, Maeser spoke on "Pedagogics," suggesting that teachers needed to do more than convey knowledge, they needed the creative gifts of the artist, the keen observational skills of the scientist, and a solid "faith in God, in nature, in human nature and in himself."<sup>49</sup> They need to cultivate and enlarge their students' own capacities "to find out things." They needed to know that their character was much more important than their competence, though they were certainly not mutually exclusive. "He who makes of his mind a mere storehouse of facts is not a scientist; he is only a cyclopedia." He concluded by promising teachers a brighter future: "O, teachers of Utah, I may not live to see the day when teachers will be on the top of the mountains, but you ought to get there. I say to you, young teachers, what a glorious hope lies before you."<sup>50</sup> Maeser also sent out an appeal to all the board members of the various stake academies to "consider it a point of honor and trust" to pay the salaries of principals and teachers in spite of "the embarrassed financial condition."<sup>51</sup>

The financial challenges of 1893 were excruciating for both public and private schools. A number of the Protestant missionary schools also had

to close for lack of adequate funds. In June 1894, Maeser was pleased to announce, “out of forty schools in operation the previous year, only twelve suspended.”<sup>52</sup> This was made possible only because so many teachers were willing to make “heavy financial sacrifices” to keep the rest open. Over the next few months, Maeser had to reassure members that the Church schools were not “dying out.”<sup>53</sup> Clark estimated that in 1890 approximately 65 percent of the secondary school students in Utah were enrolled in non-Mormon denominational schools with approximately 27 percent in Mormon schools and 8 percent in public schools. By 1895, approximately 27 percent were in non-Mormon denominational schools, 50 percent in Mormon schools, and 23 percent in public schools.<sup>54</sup>

## Cluff and the New Era

Almost immediately following the 1893 Summer Institute, Cluff left to complete another degree in the East, leaving George Brimhall and Joseph Keeler in charge of BYA. Cluff could hardly restrain his excitement about his experience in the East. He wrote to Brimhall, “I cannot begin to tell you with what interest I pursue my studies here. Every course is heavy with excellent ideas useful for the future of the Academy or other schools in which I may labor.”<sup>55</sup> He also expressed the idea of sending others in future years: “We want, therefore, the most modern methods and best trained teachers we can get.”<sup>56</sup> He did not share Maeser’s concern that study in the East could undermine faith. To BYA students, Cluff wrote, “There is perfect harmony among all truth, whether scientific, philosophical or theological, or rather that all truth emanates from one divine source; that God’s truth is studied as well in chemistry as in theology if only the proper spirit animates the student.” Of course, the proper connections required self-effort: “No one ever became educated by going to school. . . . It is in independent work that men become educated.”<sup>57</sup>

At home in Provo, five hundred people gathered on BYA Founder’s Day (October 16) to follow “Captain Maeser” to the ruins of the Lewis Building, to the ZCMI warehouse, and then to the new building. Maeser had been slated to present his reading, “Son give me thine heart,” but

had to catch a train for a General Board of Education meeting in Salt Lake, so Nels L. Nelson was requested to read it for him:<sup>58</sup>

Who spoke? A voice! . . . a still, small voice . . . “Son, give me thine heart.” A father’s voice, full of love . . . to His child, “Give me thine heart.”

The hand, symbol of physical labor, useful and honorable, must be cultivated to meet the demands of life’s necessities; the head, symbol of mental activities, elevating and controlling, has to be exercised to obtain mastership over the elements, but the heart, the symbol of the soul’s motives and aspirations, vivifying and illuminating all that hand and head can do; the heart must be consecrated, to become an acceptable offering. . . .

When to the Father’s loving call, “Son, give me thine heart,” you and I have learned to answer without reserve and without qualification, “O Father, it is thine.”<sup>59</sup>

## **Compromise with the University of Utah**

Though the General Church Board of Education had voted to postpone the fall opening of the Church University, James E. Talmage proposed that it be opened with a greatly curtailed offering of courses. In September, it opened with classes in chemistry and natural philosophy only.<sup>60</sup> In January 1894, Joseph Kingsbury, acting president of the University of Utah, pleaded with President Woodruff to close the Church University. He argued that, at the time, Utah was not in a position to support more than one university. If the Church established another university in the same city, it would be disastrous to the University of Utah. The University of Utah was facing dwindling numbers, diminished funds, and a legislative proposal to relocate to Logan and consolidate with the Agricultural College there. The possibility of losing its Latter-day Saint students to the new Church University would have been devastating to it.

Kingsbury wisely proposed that James E. Talmage be appointed president of the university in hopes that this would ease President Woodruff’s

concerns about the Church losing control of university affairs. Talmage was highly respected by both university and Church leaders and therefore might protect the interests of both groups. Persuading the Church to adopt, even tentatively, a compartmentalized policy (separating secular and religious knowledge) and convincing Talmage to accept the position of president of the university might guarantee the university's continued survival.<sup>61</sup>

Initially, Talmage did not want the position, as it would mean he would have to curtail what he taught, but he consulted with Church leaders.<sup>62</sup> By the end of January 1894, President Woodruff was prepared to invite Talmage to become the president of the University of Utah and to suspend the Church University. Surely the academies were a sufficient burden. Not only did the Church close the Church University, but it allowed the state university to use the Church University building rent free and donated it to them two years later. The Church also set up a sixty-thousand-dollar endowment for the University of Utah.<sup>63</sup>

During this important educational decision, Maeser was not available; he had been called to serve for six months as president of the California Mission. The Church was to participate in the International Midwinter Exposition in San Francisco, a world's fair, by designing an educational exhibit that Maeser would direct. Before leaving for California, Maeser presented a paper at the Utah County Teachers Association on "the Philosophy of Education."

In his paper, Maeser defined the purpose of education as the cultivation of the mind and the formation of character: "the cultivation of a true individuality, the preparation for a competent membership in human society, and the development of a pure spiritual nature." He was convinced that though great contributions had been made by statesmen, philosophers, scientists and artists, the effort to educate youth had made the greatest and most lasting impact on the development of humanity. In the past, however, education had been "the handmaid of despotism," but in free countries, it was the standard bearer of freedom and intelligence." Uniting the home and the school in this great enterprise was essential because "the family is the basis of all human society. . . . The

intellectual and moral standard of the family is the truest criterion of a nation's worth."<sup>64</sup>

In this address, Maeser claimed it was the quality and character of the teacher that had the greatest influence in the school. He was disappointed, however, that the policies of the time were "calculated to discourage the most devoted teacher in the long run" and needed to promote "permanency of position."<sup>65</sup> He felt that the standards they used were unsatisfactory both theoretically and especially morally.

Maeser thought it wise that Utah had adopted the policy that public schools be kept free from sectarian influences, for it would protect the freedom of worship. He only wished that politics would also adopt a "hands off" policy regarding the "sacred precinct" of the classroom. Teachers in particular, he believed, should restrain themselves regarding their political opinions because of their privileged relationship with children. They also needed to remain alert to the swelling flood of human necessities and ever-changing conditions that would require an educational solution. Maeser concluded his address by declaring, "In the schoolroom are the beginnings of the future destinies of our race, as the salvation of mankind started in a manger at Bethlehem."<sup>66</sup>

## **San Francisco World's Fair**

Maeser's assignment to California came at a critical time. The US Congress was considering a bill that would allow Utah to apply for statehood, and every effort was being made to show how ready the state was for this approval. Participation in the 1894 San Francisco World's Fair was viewed as an opportunity for the Church to win support for the idea of statehood. This long-sought decision would finally bring the opportunity for Utahans to elect their own governors and allow greater political autonomy. One of the conditions for this approval would be to demonstrate the Territory's willingness to support education, and there could have no better representative to do this than Karl Maeser.

The Midyear Exposition (World's Fair) in San Francisco was a major production, patterned after the extravagant Chicago World's Fair of 1893,



*Top: Manufacturing and Liberal Arts building at the San Francisco Midwinter Fair. Photo from Hubert Howe Bancroft's The Book of the Fair, 979. Photo digitized by the Paul V. Galvin Library Digital History Collection—Illinois Institute of Technology. Bottom: Centrally located, the Church education exhibit was in the Manufacturing and Liberal Arts Building. Maeser was the director. Courtesy of Library of Congress.*

which brought worldwide attention and a great deal of economic support to Illinois.<sup>67</sup> The founders of the San Francisco fair wanted to build upon the success of the Chicago exposition, so they made arrangements for many of the attractions to be transported to San Francisco, reconstructing in five months what it took five years to build in Chicago.<sup>68</sup> But the San Francisco fair planners wanted more than merely to repeat the Chicago World's Fair at the Golden Gate State Park, so they took great pains to supplement the exhibits with new attractions. Fireworks were displayed nearly every night; concerts were held daily, including such groups as the Sousa marching band; parades were held; and nearly every day was dedicated to some group, state, country, or theme. Special arrangements were made to bring in schoolchildren and alumni from various educational institutions. The fair demonstrated the latest inventions and sponsored national sporting events, including boxing matches, bicycle and foot races, wrestling matches, and swimming contests.<sup>69</sup>

Maeser arrived in San Francisco on January 24, 1894, and was pleased by the location of the Church's exhibit in the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building.<sup>70</sup> Anna had been ill, so he left her home and took his daughter, Otilie. His accommodations in San Francisco aggravated a previously developed kidney condition, but he went right to work trying to put together an interesting exhibit and organizing branch activities. Unfortunately, Maeser had enormous difficulties receiving the exhibit materials from Salt Lake, some of which did not arrive until April. After yet another mix-up, Maeser lamented, "If things continue in this manner, our exhibit will be completed sometime after the Fair has closed in July."<sup>71</sup> He served as mission president and director of the exhibit while attending to correspondence regarding the Church schools and trying to strengthen the local branches of the Church, some of which had become "rather dispirited."<sup>72</sup>

The Church had lent support to the Utah exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair, even sending the Tabernacle Choir to a competition, but that exhibit had far more to do with the minerals and produce of the Utah Territory than it did with doctrine or Church activities.<sup>73</sup> In January, John Rockey Park offered a late invitation to Maeser to

include something about Church schools in the Chicago fair. Maeser wrote to the principals in the academy system, soliciting ideas for the exhibit, but not much response was organized until the planning of the San Francisco World's Fair.<sup>74</sup>

The Church schools' exhibit in the San Francisco Exposition took a more aggressive approach than the Utah Territory exhibit in Chicago had. Maeser found daily opportunities to share his convictions regarding the Church as well as the educational accomplishments of students in the Church school system. Along with sample student work, the exhibit displayed photographs of Salt Lake City, the temple, and Church leaders.

In March, the *San Francisco Examiner* interviewed Maeser and published an article about the California Mission entitled "Invasion by the Mormons."<sup>75</sup> It even included a sketched portrait of the new mission president. The article lumped together the Church with some of its splinter groups, but Maeser was given the opportunity to announce a series of lectures he would be conducting and to publicize the Church school exhibit at the San Francisco fair.<sup>76</sup> Of course, the *Examiner* asked about polygamy and the Church's conformity to the Edmunds-Tucker Act, but Maeser also spoke of baptism, the Millennium, temple work, the pre-earth life, and "Joseph Smith's revealed announcement that, 'What man is, God once was, what God is man can be.'" The article also stated that twenty-eight persons had been baptized in California with "nearly as many more candidates" currently investigating.

## Concerns for BYA

In March, Maeser wrote to Benjamin Cluff, welcoming him back from his trip east, and to George Brimhall and Joseph Keeler, congratulating them for their leadership in his absence. He assured them that BYA would retain its support from the First Presidency as long as it remained true to the spirit of its mission. He wrote favorably about exhibits at the exposition by other educational institutions, especially that of the University of California. The university had made remarkable progress



in astronomy, mathematics, and chemistry, but Maeser “would not exchange our solid systematic moral and religious training for all these mental advantages.” He took comfort in the belief that “our studying youth will never sink to the moral level of American Colleges.”<sup>77</sup> Maeser was especially pleased with a comparison of the exhibits by *Campbell’s Illustrated Magazine of Chicago*: “The exhibit made by the Mormon schools of Utah is a very interesting and attractive one. The work done by pupils in this display is, if anything, far superior to that shown in other exhibits, and speaks well for the system of education prevailing among the disciples of Brigham Young.”<sup>78</sup>

In May, back at home, Cluff proposed two changes that seemed totally untenable to Maeser. Cluff wanted to hire a non-LDS professor from the East “to take charge of the Normal Training School of the Primary Department”<sup>79</sup> and “to discontinue the general theological class which has been held every week since at the Academy, ever since its organization.”<sup>80</sup> To Maeser, these changes would be contrary to the primary purpose of the academy and would “obliterate any vestige of our original plan, and will make it absolutely impossible for any of our church schools to look to that institution as a model.”<sup>81</sup>

In spite of Maeser’s protest, Abby C. Hale was hired to direct the primary department of the teacher training school. Cluff appealed directly to President Woodruff, insisting it was “temporary and preparatory to the thorough qualification of our own students as training teachers.”<sup>82</sup> Later Cluff hired other non-LDS teachers in subjects where he felt no qualified Latter-day Saint teachers were available.

## Closing the Church University

Maeser had hoped that his replacement as president of the California Mission would arrive in time for him to catch at least the closing exercises at BYA and the Summer Institute, and to meet Dr. Hinsdale, who had been contracted to teach, but Maeser did not arrive in Salt Lake soon enough in August to participate. Just prior to Maeser’s arrival, the First Presidency of the Church published a letter formally announcing

that the Church University would be disbanded. The Church did not want to establish an unfair competition with the University of Utah; rather they felt the need to strengthen the state university's development. "We hope that the day is not far distant when the youth of Utah will not longer need to journey afar in search of professional instruction; but that our own State will offer her sons and daughters ample facilities in all departments of intellectual progress."<sup>83</sup> They called upon the members of the Church to "faithfully devote their influence and energy . . . to the University of Utah."

This decision marked a significant change in policy. The Church University seemed positioned to become a strong academic institution and very possibly replace the University of Utah with an institution completely controlled by the Church. The First Presidency recognized that as a public institution the University of Utah could teach only subjects limited to "purely secular instruction." In fact, it declared, "it would be manifestly improper to allow any species of sectarian religious instruction to be imparted within its walls." Developing the Church University would have allowed teachers to fully integrate Latter-day Saint principles into an academic curriculum. On the other hand, maintaining a university, given the financial challenges of the time, would have been very difficult. The door to Utah statehood was finally opening, and demonstrating support for public education was a critical consideration.<sup>84</sup>

## **Education, Compromise, and Financial Struggles in the Church**

Whether or not it was viewed as a temporary response to depressed financial conditions, the decision to close the Church University marked an important compromise. The Church formalized its support of two very different models of education. Doctrinally, it continued to believe that all truth was fundamentally religious, but it formally supported an integrated model of education at the academies and a compartmentalized model of secular public education, supplemented by religious instruction. To

offset the secular emphasis of the University of Utah, the First Presidency decided that the LDS College, in close proximity to the University of Utah, would offer “full courses of daily instruction in theology.” These courses would be available to both university students and “others not regularly attending the College.”<sup>85</sup>

Of course Church leaders did not believe this compartmentalization of religious and secular education was an ideal educational model, but it seemed an acceptable and perhaps necessary compromise at the time. On August 27, Maeser was asked to explain the First Presidency’s position in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Franklin D. Richards accompanied him to offer “attestation.”<sup>86</sup>

The financial struggles of the Church were significant. In his September 1894 report to President Woodruff, Maeser confirmed the economic hardships of the Church schools. He announced that only thirteen schools were continuing, seven were still uncertain about their ability to do so, and seven had been discontinued.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, the territorial legislature was not very generous in its appropriations to the University of Utah, so Talmage was doing everything he could to ensure its survival. This created a conflict between Talmage and Cluff.

## **Conflict between Talmage and Cluff**

Talmage began to lobby that no other institution in Utah be allowed to offer college-level courses, believing this exclusivity to be a part of the agreement made between President Woodruff and Kingsbury; Cluff, on the other hand, proposed that BYA expand its collegiate course offerings to even more subjects. He also wanted BYA to be given the right to grant degrees without having to obtain the approval of the Church Board of Education. He interpreted the Church’s support of the University of Utah as undermining the academies.

In a letter to Reynolds, Maeser wrote that he had had a long interview with Cluff, who felt “irreconcilable to the whole movement in regard to the B.Y.A. and the University, and declares that he sooner will resign, if he cannot see it any clearer than he does now.”<sup>88</sup> Maeser suggested that

“Brother Cluff is getting on a high horse” after Cluff encouraged some teachers to withdraw from their Sunday School classes, perhaps in protest to what he interpreted as a lack of support for BYA. The next day, the *Deseret Weekly* published a letter from Maeser explaining the First Presidency’s position “that the Church schools in every Stake of Zion should be sustained and strengthened” and “that the First Presidency and the general board of education desire our Church schools to become feeders for the State University”:

So that our educational system may be developed in the future State of Utah, which, while guaranteeing to all religious denominations their share in fortifying the youth against the alluring influences of agnosticism and infidelity, will elevate the youth of Zion upon such a high intellectual, moral and spiritual plane as will assign them a place in the foremost ranks of the civilized communities of the earth, and make them worthy of the destinies for which the Gospel of Christ requires their preparation.<sup>89</sup>

In November, the Church General Board of Education considered granting BYA the “authority to confer degrees.” Concern was expressed that such a move would “conflict with the agreement made between the First Presidency and the Board of Regents of the University of Utah.”<sup>90</sup> Maeser reminded Reynolds that three of the academies—Brigham Young Academy, Brigham Young College, and the LDS College—had previously been offering courses in “higher education” and that the agreement with the University of Utah should not curtail the continuation of their doing so, though it would be inappropriate to expand their offerings. At the same time, he did not believe that the academies should be given the right to grant degrees independent of the Church Board of Education. He called for a “conservative medium between the extremes represented by Professors Talmage and Cluff.”<sup>91</sup> He also noted that the “university people” were pushing to establish high schools in every county. “This will be another competitor to our Stake Academies, and thus we are quietly and kindly strangled to death.”

The Church's support of the state university and public schools was not without political purpose. On July 16, 1894, US President Grover Cleveland signed the Utah Enabling Act, which laid out the stipulations for Utah's statehood. Utah was to form a constitutional convention with delegates from the various counties, secure religious tolerance, and prohibit plural marriages. The law also stipulated that "provision shall be made for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools, which shall be open to all the children of said State and free from sectarian control."<sup>92</sup>

## Education and Politics

Utah's participation in the world's fairs of Chicago and San Francisco was largely an attempt to win greater support for the idea of statehood. It also sought to demonstrate Utah's commitment to education. The Enabling Act required that the state constitution would provide for a system of public education. At the end of September, Maeser attended the meeting of the Democratic Party and was nominated as a delegate to the Utah constitutional convention. The *Evening Dispatch* reported that "to say that he was nominated by acclamation is putting it mildly. Every man in the house arose and in loud and long shout seconded the nomination. . . . He was picked up by a dozen or more delegates and carried boldly to the stage."<sup>93</sup>

Admitting that he was far more comfortable speaking on education or theology than on politics, Maeser explained his long-established commitment to democracy. He was delighted to receive such a hearty welcome from a body that represented the parents of his students.<sup>94</sup> He explained that he of course could not accept such a nomination without First Presidency approval. He was not a politician, and he made it known that his "political proclivities" were "entirely subservient to the interests of Zion."<sup>95</sup> The First Presidency apparently approved of the idea of the venerable educator's participation in the convention, however. Far from being released from his position of authority in the Church, at the October 1894 general conference, Maeser was

sustained as assistant superintendent to the General Sunday School on top of his calling as the superintendent of Church education.<sup>96</sup>

There was little room in Maeser's schedule for politics. His annual southern tour to the Church schools including Arizona and Mexico had to be shortened to allow him to be back to Utah for the beginning of March. Two days after the Utah constitutional convention opened, Abraham Smoot died and Maeser, along with a number of Church leaders including the entire First Presidency offered remarks at the funeral.<sup>97</sup> While there was little room in his schedule for politics, there was even less room for politics in his heart.

Because of his position in the Church and his belief that politics should have no place in education, Maeser explained that he would accept the delegate position if elected but would not campaign for it. Though he didn't seek for office, when the polls closed on November 5, Maeser's nomination was confirmed. The *Evening Dispatch* reported, "In a great blaze of glory, . . . everybody in Provo, man, woman and child, were out." A large procession was held, bonfires were lit, guns and cannons were fired, and, thankfully, no fights broke out. Dr. Maeser was greeted with "a spontaneous outburst of hearty applause. . . . The wild cheering embarrassed him," but he felt the need to explain why he did not campaign. He had given his word not to, and he claimed that the editor of the *Enquirer*, who had been provoking him, knew that he had given it. "I am not a coward and have the courage at any and all times to stand up in defense of my convictions," Maeser said.<sup>98</sup> He thanked his supporters for the honor of electing him to participate in such an important convention.

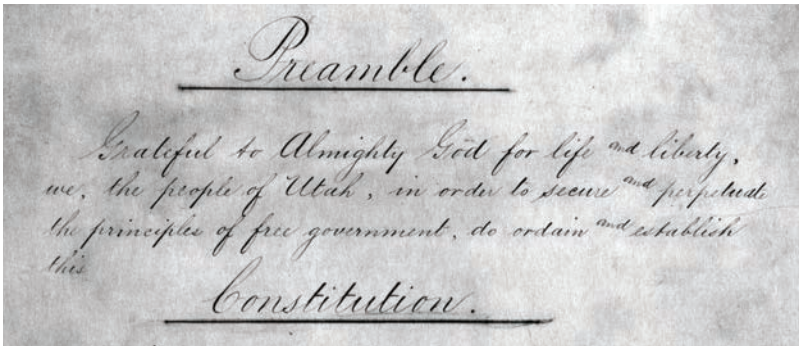
Maeser's participation in the Utah constitutional convention was significant. He saw it as their role to set general policy and not to become mired in details that the subsequent legislatures would have to undo later with amendments.<sup>99</sup> He also stood to remind his fellow delegates about the practical needs of the new state: "It is not a theory but a condition which confronts us," he explained.<sup>100</sup> When the convention was bogged down in a partisan debate over suffrage for women, Maeser challenged them to put away their intrigues and not spoil their work by trickery and



*Utah Constitutional Convention, 1895. Maeser felt honored to be a delegate. He had a significant impact on the public school section. Courtesy of Signature Books.*

procrastination: “With the eyes of the nation upon this Convention,” he said, “let us not be politicians, let us try to be statesmen. . . . Let these women of ours—these noble women, the mothers and wives and daughters and sisters of our people, have their rights.”<sup>101</sup>

On behalf of a petition from the citizens of Provo, Maeser proposed that an article on prohibition be included in the state constitution. But when it became obvious to him that a majority of the delegates did not want to include such a provision in the constitution, rather than obstructing the framing of a “Constitution that would be acceptable to the people of this Territory,” he felt that his oath required him to support the most general state policies agreeable to the majority and leave the statutory details to the new legislature. Some were critical of him “backing down” from such an important issue. He replied, “I am just as much for prohibition as ever I was. . . . I have seen the evils of the saloon element among our youth. Hundreds of cases I have had to deal with.” But the new state needed a constitution. He pledged energetically to do his utmost to send men to the legislature “that will pass a prohibitory law.”<sup>102</sup>



Preamble to the Utah Constitution, 1895. Maeser's contribution to the Utah Constitution pertained particularly to the education section. Courtesy of Utah State Archives.

Of course, Maeser's most important contribution dealt with the education section of the constitution. The *Evening Dispatch* of Provo expressed disappointment that Maeser was not placed at the head of the education committee, but instead, because he was a Democrat, "the most illustrious educator in the state [was] placed at the tail end of the educational committee." The article concluded, "There is no shame among the republicans."<sup>103</sup>

In spite of Maeser's practical concerns that the state would not be able to pay for such a "pyramidal monstrosity," the education committee proposed an elaborate plan for free public schools from kindergarten to university, to be paid for by public taxes. When the proposal was presented to the whole convention, Maeser opposed it, claiming that while primary and grammar schools should be guaranteed, it would be more prudent to leave decision for higher-level schools to the legislature. He did not believe that adequate funding could be provided at that time. His amendment "won the day," and "it was with no little chagrin that Dr. Maeser's colleagues"—who had hardly paid attention to him during their committee deliberations—"accepted the result."<sup>104</sup> Education committee member T. B. Lewis accused Maeser of opposing the plan because of the adverse effect it would have on Church schools, an accusation which "Dr. Maeser indignantly denied." "I hope to see the day when from the kindergarten to the university all education shall be free," he explained, "but in the meantime we must give every child a common education."<sup>105</sup> He



pointed out, "Thus far experience has demonstrated that in many parts of our Territory our common schools have not been able to run through all forty weeks which is considered the regular full school year." Until a solid educational foundation could be provided for all Utah children, it would be premature to speak of providing high schools. He assured the convention that he was in favor of high schools, "but it must not be done at the interest of our common schools."<sup>106</sup>

In the discussion of the role of the superintendent of public schools, Maeser declared, "All politics are a curse on education."<sup>107</sup> He was concerned that partisan politics would negatively influence the curriculum and the continuity of learning. He believed that schools needed consistency in the curriculum and in the personnel, but that politics could not provide it. A teacher or administrator who assumed "the unenviable role of pronounced partisan in school would be sacrificing the sacredness of his mission, polluting the sanctity of the schoolroom, and betraying his public trust."<sup>108</sup> Therefore, the office of superintendent should be "removed as far as possible away from politics."<sup>109</sup> The superintendent should be paid sufficiently that he could "devote his whole time for the labor that is required of him,"<sup>110</sup> and he should not be subject to term limits. While it might be nice to vote out a superintendent who was not doing a good job, limiting a good one to only one term would be detrimental.

In September, after his return from a rough and strenuous trip to Vernal, Price, Box Elder, and cities in Arizona by wagon and rail, Maeser was once again persuaded to seek political office, this time as the new state's first superintendent of public instruction. He would be running against his friend and associate John Rockey Park.<sup>111</sup> Both men felt strongly that such a position should remain aloof from party politics and committed to one another not to actively campaign for the office. In a letter to Park, Maeser wrote: "My efforts for many years have been to induce teachers to avoid entering the political arena. Knowing that a teacher's usefulness in his profession will be impaired in proportion to his political activity. With you, I share the earnest desire that the leading political parties in our future state may arrive, by and by, at

a mutual agreement, to keep educational affairs entirely out of party politics.”<sup>112</sup>

Both Park and Maeser were well-known figures in Utah education: Park was a Republican and former president of the University of Utah, and Maeser a Democrat and the superintendent of Church schools. Once again, Maeser expressed concern over whether Church leaders approved of his candidacy. He wrote to George Reynolds, secretary to the First Presidency, that if his candidacy posed any conditions “interfering with the allegiance to my priesthood, my resignation to that candidacy will be tendered at once.”<sup>113</sup> James E. Talmage personally expressed sorrow at Maeser’s decision to run for the office. He knew that in his zeal for Church schools, Maeser had criticized public schools as a “godless system,”<sup>114</sup> and Talmage feared that his beloved teacher would be beaten in the polls because he had been nominated as a Democrat and that his reputation might be smeared by party politics. Talmage felt “his past work is too great, his well earned luster of glory too bright to be tarnished by partisan struggle.”<sup>115</sup> Republicans outnumbered the Democrats, and Maeser lost by a slim margin. He did not feel terrible disappointment, however, because he felt he would have been expected to resign his Church assignment were he to have won the election.<sup>116</sup>

In October, in spite of Maeser’s previous recommendations, the Church General Board of Education granted Brigham Young Academy, Brigham Young College, and the LDS College the authority to confer bachelor’s degrees. Politically, during this time, a movement was developing to require new teachers to get a bachelor’s degree. By January, the teacher training department at the University of Utah was lobbying the legislature to grant the university the exclusive right to give teaching certificates. Maeser saw this move as a deliberate attempt to eliminate the Church’s teacher training program.<sup>117</sup>

The struggle for statehood put enormous pressures on the Church. Its enemies were unrelenting and sought every means possible to remove its influence from state affairs, including education. Maeser recognized these forces and sought to strengthen the Church’s educational

influence in spite of the pressure and the Church's financial struggles. In August 1895, he reported that only fifteen of the forty Church schools had operated that year; this meant that he had to place far more emphasis than he previously had on religion classes as a supplement to the public schools. Maeser believed that the Church's influence in the public schools was critical. Even while struggling to preserve the Church schools from financial collapse, Maeser felt obliged to provide as many LDS teachers as possible into the public schools and to strengthen children's educational experience by offering more daily religion classes after regular school hours.

In September 1895, Maeser addressed the Utah County Teachers Association on the "Development of our Public School System." He called the school system the "sanctuary of the public institutions of the country" and asserted that its effectiveness rested not upon the system itself, but upon the effectiveness of the individual teacher, the keeper of the sanctuary. He believed that all teachers needed to recognize they had a sacred duty to God: "Out of the school room a nation arises, hence the perpetuity of the great commonwealth depends upon the teacher. . . . The greatest and ultimate aim of all education is to make the pupil perfect as the Father is perfect. . . . The household of God is our destination."<sup>118</sup> Maeser explained that the public school system is not a place for personal grievances, political differences, denominational influence, or strife in any form. At the same time, however, he did not believe education should ever be a secular experience, even in public schools. He urged educators to recognize the dangers of infidelity, which he called "consumption of the soul." Teachers, he said, could set their course by this focus, just as a mariner is regulated by the polar star and not by the winds.

At 8:03 a.m., the current time in Utah, on January 4, 1896, Grover Cleveland signed the long-sought-after proclamation declaring Utah as the forty-fifth state in the Union. Almost immediately following the telegraph of this news, cannons roared, whistles blew, bells clanged, and hundreds of flags were posted. A huge flag was even draped over the side of the Salt Lake Temple, and another covering covered the



An American flag draped on the side of the Salt Lake Temple in 1896 recognizing statehood. Courtesy of J. Willard Marriott Library, George Reed Collection.

entire ceiling of the tabernacle. The conditions of the Enabling Act of 1893 had been met, and the animosity toward the Mormon Church was declared ended and a new era was opened.

## Notes

1. General Board of Education meeting minutes, October 8, 1890, UA 1376, LTPSC.
2. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890," in *In the Whirlpool: The Pre-Manifesto Letters of President Wilford Woodruff to the William Atkin Family, 1885–1890*, ed. Reid L. Neilson (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark, 2011).
3. The Church School Convention was an annual meeting of all faculty, staff and board members of the Church Educational System. It wasn't expected that all could attend, but it was hoped that at least one representative from each institution would attend.
4. General Board of Education meeting minutes, April 9, 1889, UA 1376, LTPSC.
5. Karl G. Maeser, "A Retrospect," *Normal*, January 4, 1892, 67–68.
6. Maeser, "A Retrospect," *Normal*, January 4, 1892, 68.
7. Maeser, *School and Fireside* (Provo, UT: Skelton, 1898), 212.

8. For a discussion of how government control shifted from the spectacle to the minute measurement of modern carceral institutions: the hospital, the prison and the school, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 293–308.
9. See for example, Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, October 25, 1890, in *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. James R. Clark (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 3:196–98. “All teachings of a religious character are rigorously excluded from the studies permitted in these institutions. To lessen this great evil, and counteract the tendencies that grow out of a Godless education, the Church schools of the Saints have been established.”
10. “Church School Convention,” *Deseret Weekly News*, June 11, 1892, 817.
11. General Board of Education meeting minutes, June 2, 1890, UA 1376, LTPSC.
12. General Board of Education meeting minutes, October 8, 1890.
13. Karl G. Maeser to Wilford Woodruff, September 12, 1891, UA 1094, LTPSC.
14. “Church School Convention,” 818.
15. General Board of Education meeting minutes, June 2, 1891.
16. General Board of Education meeting minutes, June 2, 1891.
17. General Board of Education meeting minutes, December 19, 1890.
18. “Church School Convention,” 817.
19. “Fitting Tribute to Dr. Karl G. Maeser,” *Daily Enquirer*, March 3, 1892.
20. “Dr. Karl G. Maeser,” *Deseret News*, March 12, 1892, 376.
21. “President Eliot’s Address,” *Deseret News*, March 26, 1892, 486.
22. This comparison was not taken well by the Boston press, who criticized Eliot for his comments.
23. “Dr. Maeser’s Lecture,” *Deseret Weekly News*, June 25, 1892, 16.
24. Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), 1:269.
25. “The Reception,” *Daily Enquirer*, August 4, 1892, 1.
26. “The Reception,” 1.
27. Francis Parker to Karl G. Maeser, ACCN0379, box 213, folder 16, Frederick Stewart Buchanan Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
28. Maeser to Woodruff, March 21, 1891, box 1, folder 7, no. 36.
29. General Board of Education meeting minutes, April 9, 1889, UA 1376, LTPSC.
30. For a rich overview of the Church University see Brian Ricks, “Closing the Church University in 1894: Embracing or Accommodating Secularized Education” (PhD diss., Brigham Young

- University, 2012). See also D. Michael Quinn, "The Brief Career of Young University at Salt Lake City," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1973): 69–89.
31. "Other Church Schools," *Deseret News*, September 6, 1890, 369.
  32. See "Salt Lake City and Church Schools," *Deseret News*, September 20, 1890, 414–15.
  33. General Board of Education meeting minutes, June 5, 1891, UA 1376, 55–56, LTPSC.
  34. "Latter-day Saints' College," *Deseret News*, January 23, 1892, 185–186.
  35. "The Third Day: Church University," *Daily Enquirer*, April 6, 1892, 4.
  36. Willard Done, "Church School Convention," *Deseret Weekly News*, June 11, 1892, 817.
  37. "Dr. Maeser's Return," *Deseret Weekly News*, December 17, 1892, 807.
  38. For further understanding see Ronald W. Walker, "Crisis in Zion: Heber J. Grant and the Panic of 1893," in *Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle*, special edition of *Brigham Young University Studies* 43, no. 1 (2004): 115–42.
  39. Walker, "Crisis in Zion," 117.
  40. Walker, "Crisis in Zion," 136.
  41. Maeser to Woodruff, March 7, 1893.
  42. Karl G. Maeser to George Reynolds, July 20, 1893, UA 1094, box 2, no. 53, LTPSC.
  43. General Board of Education meeting minutes, August 11, 1893.
  44. "Brigham Young Summer School," *Deseret News*, August 12, 1893, 14.
  45. Joseph Baldwin in "The Psychology of Happiness," *Daily Enquirer*, August 14, 1893,
  46. "Thursday Morning," *Daily Enquirer*, August 10, 1893, 4.
  47. Karl G. Maeser, "The Church School Convention," *Juvenile Instructor*, September 1, 1893, vol. 28, no. 17, 554.
  48. General Board of Education meeting minutes, August 11, 1893, UA 1376, LTPSC.
  49. "The Teachers' Institute," *Deseret News*, August 26, 1893, 15.
  50. From an address to teachers given at the summer institute, August 16, 1893, Provo, UT, in *Deseret Weekly News*, August 26, 1893.
  51. Karl G. Maeser, "Church School Papers, no. 21" *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1, 1893, vol. 28, no. 11, 354.
  52. "Church School Papers," *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1, 1894, 351.
  53. See, for example, "Church School Papers," *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1, 1894, vol 29, no. 3, 89 and "Church School Papers," *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1, 1894, 351–52.
  54. James R. Clark, "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah" (PhD diss., Utah State University, 1958), 280.

55. Benjamin Cluff to George Brimhall, November 5, 1893, UA 1093, box 1, folder 1, no. 30, Cluff Papers, LTPSC.
56. Benjamin Cluff to George Brimhall and J. B. Keeler, November 12, 1893, UA 1093, box 1, folder 1, no. 31, Cluff Papers, LTPSC.
57. Benjamin Cluff to BYA student body, December 16, 1893, UA 1093, box 1, folder 1, no. 41, LTPSC.
58. "Church School Papers," *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1, 1893, 681.
59. The full text was published in the *Normal*, November 15, 1893, 44–45.
60. See James E. Talmage, journal, August 26, 1893, MS 229, LTPSC. See also "Announcement of the Church University for the year 1893–4" (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1893), M266.4 C561a c. 2, CHL.
61. Ricks, "Closing the Church University in 1894."
62. Before major decisions, Talmage often sought fatherly counsel from Maeser, but this was not possible during Maeser's absence.
63. Ralph Chamberlin, *The University of Utah: History of Its First Hundred Years, 1850–1950*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1960), 203.
64. Karl G. Maeser, "The Philosophy of Education," *Evening Dispatch*, January 23, 1894, 4.
65. Maeser, "The Philosophy of Education," 4.
66. Maeser, "The Philosophy of Education," 4.
67. The best source on the Chicago Fair is Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair* (Chicago: Bancroft Company, 1893). Chapter 28 in Bancroft's book was added to explain the relationship between the Chicago World's Fair and San Francisco's Midwinter Exposition.
68. See William Lipsky, *Images of America: San Francisco's Midwinter Exposition* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002).
69. A daily report of fair activities appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.
70. Utah also had an exhibit in the Mechanical Arts building.
71. Maeser to Reynolds, March 27, 1894, box 2, folder 3.
72. Maeser to Reynolds, January 30, 1894, no. 10.
73. See, for example, E. A. McDaniel, *Utah at the World's Columbian Exposition* (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Lithographing, 1894). There was an education display as part of the Utah exhibit, but it did not highlight anything regarding the Church school system. J. R. Park had contacted Maeser about the possibility, and Maeser sent out the invitation to the principals of the Church schools (*Juvenile Instructor*, January 15, 1893, 67), but the financial crisis that followed curtailed their participation. Wilford Woodruff spoke on Utah

Day about pioneers and the settlement of Utah, but the exhibit did not include much about Mormonism.

74. See Karl G. Maeser, "Church School Papers," *Juvenile Instructor*, January 15, 1893, 67.
75. "Invasion by the Mormons," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 4, 1894. This article was reprinted in "Spreading the Faith: Mormon Missionaries at Work in California," the *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1894, 2.
76. About Maeser the *Examiner* wrote, "Dr. Maeser is a venerable, white-haired German with an interesting style of expounding the doctrines of the Saints." "Invasion by the Mormons," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 4, 1894.
77. Karl G. Maeser to Benjamin Cluff, April 9, 1894, UA 1093, box 1, folder 2, no. 36, LTPSC.
78. "California Midwinter Exposition," *Campbell's Illustrated Monthly*, June 1894, 20.
79. Karl G. Maeser to John Nuttall, May 2, 1894, UA 1094, box 2, folder 3, no. 4, LTPSC.
80. Maeser to Reynolds, May 25, 1894, no. 35.
81. Maeser to Reynolds, May 15, 1894, no. 34.
82. Cluff to Woodruff, August 8, 1894, in Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 1:258. Miss Hale directed the program for three years.
83. "The Editor's Comments: Official Announcement," *Deseret News*, August 25, 1894, 294.
84. These issues are explored in depth in Ricks, "Closing the Church University in 1894."
85. "The Editor's Comments: Official Announcement," *Deseret News*, August 25, 1894, 294. While Talmage was preparing materials for the Church University he had launched a theology class at the LDS College that was open to all. The lecture room was overflowing so the next week they moved it to the Assembly Hall where five hundred to six hundred people attended. By December, it had grown to 1,100 participants. After he became the President of the University of Utah, Talmage was asked to stop teaching this course.
86. Franklin D. Richards, journal, August 27, 1894, CHL.
87. Maeser to Woodruff, September 15, 1894, box 2, folder 3, no. 53.
88. Maeser to Reynolds, September 21, 1894, no. 40.
89. Karl G. Maeser, "Our Church Schools," *News*, September 22, 1894, 427.
90. General Board of Education meeting minutes, November 9, 1894, UA 1376, LTPSC.
91. Maeser to Reynolds, December 12, 1894, no. 47.
92. Frederick S. Buchanan, "Education among the Mormons: Brigham Young and the Schools of Utah," *History of Education Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 442.
93. "The Convention," *Evening Dispatch*, October 1, 1894, 4.



94. See "The City Is Safe," *Evening Dispatch*, September 28, 1894; and "The Convention," October 1, 1894, 4.
95. Maeser to Reynolds, September 29, 1894, nos. 41, 44.
96. Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 5, 1894, 9, CHL.
97. This was a huge blow to BYA because Smoot had been such a stabilizing supporter and carried the school through so many perilous financial circumstances. Brigham Young Jr., a member of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was named as the new president of the BYA board of trustees.
98. "The Last Rally," *Evening Dispatch*, November 6, 1894, 1.
99. See, for example, his comments in *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention Assembled to Adopt a Constitution for the State of Utah*, April, 22, 1895. These records may be found at <http://le.utah.gov/documents/conconv/utconstconv.htm>.
100. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, March 26, 1895.
101. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, April 1, 1895.
102. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, April 24, 1895.
103. "Badly Placed," *Evening Dispatch*, March 12, 1895, 1.
104. "Editorials," *Journal of Pedagogy*, April 1895, 141–42.
105. "The School Teachers of the County," *Evening Dispatch*, May 29, 1895, 2.
106. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, April 19, 1895.
107. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, April 3, 1895.
108. Karl G. Maeser, *School and Fireside* (Provo, UT: Skelton, Maeser, 1867), 122.
109. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, April 3, 1895.
110. *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, April 18, 1895.
111. Maeser was even asked to dedicate Park's grave on October 3, 1900. "The Last Sad Rites," *Salt Lake Herald*, October 4, 1900, 5.
112. The letter was dated September 18, 1895, and appeared in the September 1895 issue of the *Journal of Pedagogy*.
113. Maeser to Reynolds, October 12, 1895, UA 726, box 1, folder 4, LTPSC.
114. See, for example, Maeser's comments at the first Church School Convention April 9, 1889, "That system of godless education has proven unsatisfactory, and we will have none of it." General Church Board of Education meeting minutes, 1888–1902, UA 1376, box 1, LTPSC.
115. Talmage, journal, November 6, 1895, 269–70, MS 229, LTPSC.
116. The newspapers had been quite critical of the potential for a conflict of interest if he retained his position as superintendent of Church schools while serving as superintendent

of public schools at the same time. See, for example: "Dr. Maeser ought to do one or the other in his case. It ought not to go out to the world that in Utah the church schools are comingled with the public schools. The two systems are separate and distinct and should so remain." "General Items," *Daily Enquirer*, October 3, 1895, 2. See also "A Host of Them," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 4, 1895; "Provo Paragraphs," *Salt Lake Herald*, October 3, 1895, 7; "The Democratic Ticket," *Daily Enquirer*, September 6, 1895, 2.

117. Maeser to Cluff, February 20, 1896, UA 1094, box 1, folder 5, LTPSC.

118. "Utah County Teachers Association," *Deseret News*, September 21, 1895, 428.