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THE INTELLECTUAL TRADITION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Leonard J. Arrington

Historians and writers have given insufficient attention to L.D.S. intellectual achievements, in the opinion of Leonard Arrington, a High Councilor in Utah State University Stake. Professor Arrington currently serves as President of the Western History Association.

In one of the earliest books of imaginative literature about the American West (published in 1826), novelist–editor–missionary–biographer Timothy Flint reveals a common impression of the time that "in travelling towards the frontier, the decreasing scale of civilization and improvement exhibits an accurate illustration of inverted history." Flint's better-known contemporary, James Fenimore Cooper, although an admirer of the West, acknowledged that "refinement and gentility were conceivable only in members of an upper class with enough wealth to guarantee its leisure, and a sufficiently secure social status to give it poise and assurance." Still another contemporary, Ralph Waldo Emerson, stated that "The pioneers are commonly the off-scourings of civilized society."

Eastern intellectuals were almost unanimous in describing Western settlers as uncouth, unpolished, and culturally degraded. The natural landscape of the West, in which most of the Eastern romantics included the Indians, was often regarded as sublime, but the adjustment to wilderness life encouraged the squatters to slip backward in the scale of civilization. Out of the West, in the opinion of Arthur Moore, came "rank anti-intellectualism."

Adapted from Professor Arrington's address to a plenary session of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, on September 13, 1968, at St. George, Utah. The original address is published with full documentation in *Proceedings of the Utah Academy . . .*, Volume 46, Part 1, 1969.

The reversion-to-barbarism theme was applied with special persistence to the early settlers of Utah, but here it was attributed to the religion rather than to the natural environment. Thus, while the remainder of the West at least had the hope of becoming re-civilized as soon as the physical constraints were removed and the amenities restored, this was not true of Mormon country, where the dominant religion, by virtue of its supposed inherent deciviliz-ing character, condemned the territory and its residents to more or less perpetual savagery.[1] Nearly all of the fifty or more nineteenth-century novels which described life in Utah portrayed the Mormons as incurably ignorant, lecherous, and depraved.[2] But the most damning indictment of all was penned as recently as 1926 by Bernard DeVoto — one of Utah's own sons and probably its most brilliant literary personality. "Civilized life does not exist in Utah," DeVoto wrote. "It never has existed there. It never will exist there." "No poets lingered there, no musicians, philosophers, or scholars." Utah's settlers, he wrote, came "from localities where civilization had never penetrated," and their "only distinguishing characteristics were their servility to their leaders and their beliefs in a low-comedy God." There was "rigorous suppression of individuality, impracticability, scepticism, and all the other qualities of intelligence." As a result, Utah was poor "in everything that makes for civilization." "Who ever heard," he asked, "of a Utah painter, a Utah sculptor, a Utah novelist, or poet, or critic, or educator, or editor, or publicist — who ever heard of a Utahn?"[3]

Believing that Utah's non-Mormon residents were "less fanatical" and "less ignorant" than the Mormons, DeVoto lodged the responsibility for the poverty of Utah's culture on the narrow and unthinking character of its religious heritage. Indeed, in "A Revaluation," written some twenty years after the *American Mercury* outburst, DeVoto admitted that, while his earlier article had been "dishonest" and "irresponsible," he still believed "that Utah, and especially Mormon culture" was more provincial than most of the nation, that it was "extremely sensitive and intolerant to criticism and even to difference of opinion in which there is no criticism whatever," and that "the orthodox Mormon mind cannot tolerate any objective treatment of Mormon history whatever."[4]

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[1]Two recent works which emphasize the positive cultural and intellectual contributions of frontier religious groups and institutions hitherto disparaged are: T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier* (Chicago and London, 1964); and Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas, 1955).

[2]Jon Haupt and I have discussed this in "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *The Western Humanities Review*, XXII (Summer 1968), 243–60, and "The Missouri and Nauvoo Mormons in Ante-bellum Fiction," in a volume to be published by the Southern Illinois University Press under the tentative title *The Mormons in Illinois*.

[3]DeVoto, "Utah," *American Mercury*, VII (March 1926), 319–21.

[4]DeVoto, "A Revaluation," *Rocky Mountain Review*, X (Autumn 1945), 8–10. An earlier Westerner, Bret Harte, complained that the best brains of California — meaning especially his own — were unappreciated. Accepting such statements at face value, some literary critics have alleged that sensitive writers were scorned by their home towns. Psychoanalysts

An intellectual, according to *Webster's New International Dictionary*, is a person of superior intelligence; a person devoted to matters of the mind and especially to the arts and letters; a person given to study, reflection, and speculation, especially concerning large, profound, or abstract issues; a person engaged in activity requiring preeminently the use of the intellect. He is usually viewed as a person who is capable of commenting upon society and its problems "with greater detachment than those more directly caught up in the practical business of production and power."[5]

Were there persons with these qualities among our Latter-day Saint forebears? Did the Mormon community have intellectuals — and are there such persons in our community today?

There is a special problem involved in seeking to denote intellectuals in a religious group as fully committed as the Latter-day Saints. A "real intellectual," it is said, will not subordinate rationalism to other ways of knowing, such as authoritarianism or mysticism.[6] But "good Mormons" will do so, for that is a part of their being good Mormons. So-called Mormon intellectuals, it is said, will rationalize that revelation is superior to reason. Should one water down the word "intellectual" by including the bright and industrious Mormon scholars who have failed the acid test of standing outside their own culture and evaluating it all the way on the basis of the best "thinking of men"?[7] Such a high standard for the classification "real intellectuals" would reduce substantially the number of "real Mormons" who could qualify.[8] Actually, dictionary and encyclopedia definitions of "intellectual" permit the inclusion of persons with religious faith. There is no definition which would disqualify a St. Augustine, an Aquinas, a Thomas More, or a Cardinal Newman.

The primary question is the extent to which one's emotional attachment to certain "final truths" informs his intellectual activity; whether his soul-ties prevent his thought on key issues from being freely detachable from his own cultural traditions. Bertrand Russell suggests that in studying a given phil-

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might see a relationship between such derogatory outbursts and the personal frustrations of Western writers. See, e.g., Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (New York, 1939), pp. 266–68.

[5]Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889–1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York, 1965, 1967), p. ix.

[6]The word "authoritarian" refers to subjection to authority — an undesirable state; "authoritative" means sanctioned by authority and is usually regarded as something desirable. Lowell Bennion cautions that Mormonism is authoritative but not authoritarian. Bennion, *Religion and the Pursuit of Truth* (Salt Lake City, 1959), pp. 24–29.

[7]One reader suggests that some dedicated Mormon scholars fail this acid test because of cowardice, others because of intellectual and/or psychological incapability, and still others because they are unable to make up their minds whether their first loyalty is to objective scholarship or to revered churchmen.

[8]One respondent to the questionnaire described below states that in one sense there have been no Mormon intellectuals because Mormons fled from the strife and contentions of religious and intellectual debate and sought authoritarian ("authoritative"?) answers to intellectual questions. Another opined that anyone who passed the test of evaluating Mormon culture on the basis of the best "thinking of men" would necessarily be *persona non grata*, and thus those Mormons who became intellectuals were, by definition, apostates.

osopher or line of thought "the right attitude is neither reverence nor contempt, but first a kind of hypothetical sympathy." One should cultivate the enlargement of the scope of his mind beyond his own "cherished prejudices" by exercising his historical and psychological imagination.[9] There would seem to be no inherent reason why our more sophisticated thinkers could not thus project their minds as have highly-committed persons in other religions and cultures.

Richard Hofstadter posits two qualities in the intellectual's attitude toward ideas — playfulness and piety. Playfulness, he writes, is openness to the potential of ideas — "sheer delight in intellectual activity."

> Truth captured loses its glamor; truths long known and widely believed have a way of turning false with time; easy truths are a bore, and too many of them become half-truths. Whatever the intellectual is too certain of, if he is healthily playful, he begins to find unsatisfactory. The meaning of his intellectual life lies not in the possession of truth but in the quest for new uncertainties.

The other quality is piety, for the intellectual recognizes that values underlie every question that is posed; the life of the mind has a "kind of primary moral significance. . . . The intellectual is *engagé* — he is pledged, committed, enlisted. What everyone else is willing to admit, namely that ideas and abstractions are of signal importance in human life, he imperatively feels."[10]

How open and pious have Latter-day Saint scholars been in searching for truth? How creative and playful have they been in developing new interpretations and hypotheses?[11]

One might distinguish four stages in the growth of Mormon intellectuality: the formative stage, the stage of elaboration, the purification stage, and the stage of creative adaptation.[12]

The formative stage covers the period from the organization of the infant Church of Christ in western New York State in 1830 to the assassination of Joseph Smith in Illinois in 1844. Four persons were paramount in the introduction of new concepts and policies: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley Pratt, and Orson Pratt. The historian's problem in assessing the intellectuality

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[9]Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, 1945), p. 39.

[10]Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1962), pp. 27–30.

[11]A prominent non-Mormon historian, who in his capacity as head of his department at a large university has interviewed many young Mormons, tells me that he thinks young Mormon scholars are too tense — too serious — as if they were uneasy in an environment which must play with hypotheses, even with cherished ones. My own experience is that young Mormon intellectuals are quite free in playing around with new ideas and concepts when they are with "kindred souls," and that they become more guarded — and "tense" — when among non-Mormons or highly dogmatic Mormons. As they grow older, they tend to become more relaxed and secure about their faith and commitment.

[12]Four penetrating essays which discuss Mormonism and intellectuals are: Ephraim E. Ericksen, "William H. Chamberlin, Pioneer Mormon Philosopher," *The Western Humanities Review*, VIII (Autumn 1954), 275–85; R. Kent Fielding, "Historical Perspectives for a Liberal Mormonism," *The Western Humanities Review*, XIV (Winter 1960), 69–80; Davis Bitton, "Anti-Intellectualism in Mormon History," *Dialogue*, I (Autumn 1966), 111–34 — also the "Comment" of James B. Allen, *Dialogue*, I (Autumn 1966), 134–40; and Thomas F. O'Dea, "Sources of Strain and Conflict," in *The Mormons* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 222–57.

of Joseph Smith is magnified by the fact that the most sophisticated of his works (Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, Doctrine and Covenants) are theophanous – that is, the ultimate author, translator, or inspirer of the works was represented to be Deity. But whatever the precise relative contributions of Joseph Smith, ancient theologians, and God, the words and ideas contained in these works passed through the Prophet's mind, and thus we are permitted to apply to them the same literary and philosophical criticism that we apply to other works. The noted Catholic sociologist, Thomas O'Dea, undertook to study the Book of Mormon from this point of view and concluded that the book did indeed have significant intellectual content and was worthy of the attention of students of American intellectual history. "The intellectuality of the *Book of Mormon*," he wrote, "is to be seen in its recognition of currents of thought other than and antagonistic to its own point of view, and especially in its awareness of current skepticism and rationalism."[13] The book also provided "a reasonable answer to problems of existence and salvation." While there is no comparable study of the content of the Pearl of Great Price and Doctrine and Covenants by a scholar of national stature, the writings and sermons of Joseph Smith have attracted and motivated several generations of Latter-day Saints. The Prophet exercised leadership in relating individual members and the group to the universe and to society at large, legitimated authority and defined its responsibilities, and interpreted the Church's historical role.[14]

With respect to the other three early leaders, Sydney Rigdon contributed most of the "Lectures on Faith" and many sermons which relate to such early principles and ordinances as faith, repentance, baptism, spiritual gifts, the Millennium, and communitarianism. Parley Pratt wrote *Voice of Warning* (1837), *Key to Theology* (1855), *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (1874), and founded the *Latter-day Saint's Millennial Star* (Liverpool, 1840–date). Parley's brother, Orson, often regarded as the foremost Mormon intellectual of the nineteenth century, wrote a series of pamphlets for distribution in England which gave philosophical meaning and depth to many of the theological teachings. Many of these were important enough to be reviewed in the foremost literary and philosophical journals in Europe.[15]

That there was intellectual ferment in early Mormonism is clear; the *History of the Church* as dictated by Joseph Smith or written by his secretaries reports many instances of interchange of ideas and dissent from authoritatively-held interpretations. The dispersion which occurred after his death in 1844 is evidence that Joseph Smith held together persons of a wide variety of opinions and beliefs. Although not always, Joseph Smith often opposed

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[13]O'Dea, *The Mormons*, pp. 30–31.

[14]Among the most admired and respected works of Joseph Smith, in addition to the three mentioned, are his "Inspired Translation" of the Bible, the King Follett Sermon, his letters from Liberty Jail, and his dictated history of the Church.

[15]See F. Mark McKiernan, "The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness: Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer, 1793–1876" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1968); Reva Stanley, *A Biography of Parley P. Pratt: The Archer of Paradise* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1937); T. Edgar Lyon, "Orson Pratt – Early Mormon Leader" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1932).

the dogmatists within the Church who, once they got hold of a "truth," sought to discourage the creative thought of others who continued to experiment with even newer "truths." For this reason, early Mormonism took on the coloration of a fellowship of believers in "Restored Christianity" rather than a sect with inflexible ideology.[16] On one occasion Pelatiah Brown, an older member of the Church, expressed in convincing language some of his own ideas with respect to "the beast full of eyes before and behind" in the Revelation of St. John. Certain members of the community disagreed with his interpretations and "hauled him up for trial before the High Council." Joseph Smith remonstrated with them for doing so, and in the next public meeting devoted the first part of his sermon to a plea for freedom of religious thought:

> I [do] not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodists, and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be kicked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine.[17]

The *elaboration stage* (the second stage) may be said to begin with the murder of Joseph Smith in 1844 and continue to the organization of the School of the Prophets in 1867. Brigham Young, as Joseph Smith's successor (so far as the "Utah Mormons" are concerned), did not envision himself as an innovator, either in theology or in social affairs. The conditions under which Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles assumed leadership assured a hierarchical structure designed along authoritarian lines. The theophanous works of Joseph Smith were canonized into doctrine, and the doctrine and organizational structure of the Church became more dogmatic and inflexible. Brigham's task was to preach the doctrines, carry out the policies, and administer the programs of the founding Prophet. A man of enormous determination and energy, and able to command the loyalty of men of unquestioned endowments, Brigham Young's intellect did not express itself as freely as did that of his predecessor in the creation of new ideas and symbols.[18]

Thus, the intellectual elaboration and development of the potentialities inherent in the doctrines and policies formulated during the Joseph Smith era focused around three groups in early Utah.

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[16]Dogmatic theology regarding the traditional questions of soteriology, ecclesiology, and the like, were far less important to Mormons than their eschatology. The announcement of the fact of the Restoration, the call to gather, the expected coming of Christ — these were the central elements. These ideas, and the specific programs for which they provided the rationale, were flexible.

[17]"History of Joseph Smith," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, XX (1858), 774; also Joseph Smith, *History of the Church . . . Period I*, ed. B. H. Roberts (6 vols.; Salt Lake City, 1946), V, 340.

[18]In a letter to the writer, Davis Bitton argues that I have overdone the contrast between Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, leaving the impression that there was more fluidity under the former and more hardening under the latter than actually was the case. He cites evidence that Brigham was not really a dogmatist when it came to doctrine.

First, the private secretaries and advisors of Brigham Young, including John Jaques, George D. Watt, Thomas Bullock, David McKenzie, and George A. Smith. The work of these men finds expression in the letters signed by Brigham Young and directed to government officials, apostles, mission presidents, and, most importantly, to Colonel Thomas L. Kane. Having studied these documents in some detail, the writer offers his word that they are often of high quality, with substantial intellectual content.

Second, editors of and writers for *The Deseret News, Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star, The Seer, The Frontier Guardian, The Mormon,* and other publications of the Church. These included Willard Richards, Orson Pratt, Orson Hyde, Franklin D. Richards, and John Taylor. All of these were men of intellectual substance and productivity.

Third, educators and independent writers, including James Linforth and Frederick Piercy, who prepared the 1855 edition of *Route from Liverpool* which was recently republished by Harvard University Press; Edward W. Tullidge and E. L. T. Harrison, the editors of *Peep O'Day,* an independent weekly magazine of literature, science, and art; and Sarah Carmichael, whose poetry attracted the attention of national figures, including William Cullen Bryant, who placed one of her poems in his book of "best American poetry."

The third stage, the *stage of purification,* may be said to begin with the inauguration of the "Protective Movement" in 1867 and end with the achievement of statehood in 1896. The establishment of Protection, it should be explained, is related to the approach of the transcontinental railroad. Many observers, both within and outside of Utah, recognized certain threats posed by the imminent completion of the Pacific Railroad. Eastern and Midwestern enterprisers and laborers would flock in to exploit new mines and markets, thus threatening the continuance of theocratic control of the region. Increased commercial intercourse would threaten the economic autonomy of the Mormon community. Brigham Young and his associates saw this as a time for the Saints to band together to preserve their unique way of life.

A number of economic programs formed the core of Mormon Protectionism: branch railroads were built by the Mormons themselves to connect L.D.S. settlements with the main line; trade was centered in a Parent Wholesale Store (ZCMI) and in cooperative retail outlets in the wards and settlements; new manufacturing and financial enterprises were launched; and various devices were instituted for preserving group loyalties and strengthening community institutions. The group was directed by a community planning council called the School of the Prophets, with a central body in Salt Lake City and branch schools in each of the principal settlements. At the same time, a coordinated program was established to assure the participation of the women of the Church with the organization of centrally-directed auxiliary, the Female Relief Society. This group also had local organizations in each settlement, as did the Young Ladies' Retrenchment Society (later the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association), which was formed at this time to supervise activities of the young women. (A little later, the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association was organized for young men.) Uni-

fying devices included *The Woman's Exponent*, which was founded in 1870 as an independent magazine for women, and *The Contributor* commenced in 1879 as an independent magazine for young men. A central Sunday School organization likewise was established at this time to teach the gospel to young people, and a magazine was inaugurated for their use called *The Juvenile Instructor.*

Unquestionably, this movement of indoctrination for purposes of protecting the Mormon way of life involved a certain surrendering of free thought — or, at least, of the freedom to propagate heretical and hostile thought. Shortly after the protective movement was launched, a group of "liberal" Mormons — comprising several members of the Utah intellectual community — founded a "liberal" journal called *The Utah Magazine.* Boldly, they advocated accommodation to dominant forces at work in the nation. They opposed an "exclusive" social and economic policy, contended that the priesthood was not infallible, and raised questions about the influence of church leadership on economics, politics, and education. The leaders of this group, William S. Godbe, E. L. T. Harrison, Edward W. Tullidge, Henry W. Lawrence, and others, were brought before a church tribunal and excommunicated. Several other "liberals" left the Church in sympathy.

Intellectual leaders during the purification stage included, once again, Orson Pratt, whose *Key to the Universe*, published in Liverpool in 1873, was an early attempt to stretch the gospel beyond a simple theological pattern, thus introducing a wider philosophical meaning to church thought; George Q. Cannon, who edited *The Juvenile Instructor*, wrote several books for young people, kept a diary which one who has read it states to be magnificent, and as congressional delegate supervised the campaign for statehood; Edward W. Tullidge, whose contributions to L.D.S. literature included several articles for magazines of national circulation, the publication of *Tullidge's Quarterlies*, and the authorship of such books as *Life of Joseph the Prophet, Life of Brigham Young, History of Salt Lake City*, and *History of Northern Utah and Southern Idaho*; and Emmeline B. Wells, who edited *The Women's Exponent* during most of this period, and Susa Young Gates who wrote dozens of books, both fictional and non-fictional, and edited *The Young Woman's Journal.*

The purification period witnessed an accelerated educational program aimed at countering the inroads of denominational academies established in several localities in the territory. Although a vehicle of intellectual isolation, perpetuating to some extent the insularity of the period which preceded it, this renewed interest in education prompted the founding of the Brigham Young Academy in Provo (now Brigham Young University), the Brigham Young College in Logan, and the Latter-day Saints College in Salt Lake City. In addition, the University of Deseret was revitalized and converted into the University of Utah; and many academies or high schools were established in the various settlements.

The fourth stage, which might be called *the stage of creative adaptation*, seems to have commenced about the time of statehood and has continued to the present. This stage has involved the adaptation of secular learning to the

needs of the Mormons — or, to put it the other way around, the adaptation of the doctrines and practices of the Mormons to the secular world in which they live.[19]

Several events of intellectual importance have taken place during these 72 years. First, a number of graduates of the University of Deseret, L.D.S. University, Brigham Young College, and Brigham Young Academy began to go East to study at secular institutions. Faced with the problem of reconciling their own teachings with those of "the outside world," they ultimately created philosophies, theories, and explanations which enriched the intellectual content of Mormon doctrine. Second, the growth and expansion of Utah institutions of higher learning, and particularly those where the students were entirely or predominantly of Mormon origin, forced the adaptation of courses of study to bridge the gap between opposing cultures and values. The writing of textbooks, in the sciences and humanities as well as in religion, fostered experimentation with creative philosophies. One of the most important developments during this period was the initiation of "Religion Classes," which attempted to provide training in religion on a level equivalent to that in secular classes. These were ultimately divided into seminary instruction for high school students and Institutes of Religion classes for those in colleges and universities. Third, the intellectual growth and intellectual changes in the nation generally emboldened Mormon educators and students to study the theory of evolution, Higher Criticism, behaviorism, communism, and other crosscurrents.

The adaptation of a fiercely-held faith — a faith which could motivate and propel the successful settlement of a region as arid as most of Utah — was bound to produce a tension. Out of this tension many *causes célèbres* arose: the resignations in 1911 of three prominent staff members of the Brigham Young University who were warned about their advanced views on evolution and Higher Criticism; the 1915 resignations of a number of staff members at the University of Utah who protested controls and interferences by representatives of the dominant culture; and a number of excommunications, releases, displacements, and demotions within the memories of members of the Academy here today. These cases were often more complex than the general public realized, and some of the official decisions were undoubtedly justified as necessary to achieving the basic objectives of the institution or the community, but it is clear that an atmosphere of isolation and fear and an emphasis on indoctrination have at times discouraged free expression and discussion. It is also clear, fortunately, that discussion and criticism, dissent if you will, continued to be heard.

The view of the Church during this "modern" stage thus has varied, as one might expect, from cautious acceptance of the "new learning" to warn-

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[19]Although creative, the period has also been frustrating. Some Mormon intellectuals have not remained to enrich the intellectual content of Mormon doctrine but abandoned both the region and the Church. The problems and negative aspects of this fourth period have been well described by Bitton, Fielding, and Ericksen in the essays previously cited. I am simply recognizing here that there have also been positive achievements during the period.

ings that the "word of God as expressed by the Brethren" is a more safe position than pinning one's faith on the uncertain foundations of a secular learning which holds that there is no final truth. Perhaps the Church's most careful expression of its point of view was that given ten years ago to the students and faculty of Brigham Young University by President Hugh B. Brown:

> We are very grateful in the Church and in this great university that the freedom, dignity, and integrity of the individual is basic in church doctrine as well as in democracy. Here we are free to think and express our opinions. Fear will not stifle thought, as is the case in some areas which have not yet emerged from the dark ages. God himself refuses to trammel man's free agency even though its exercise sometimes teaches painful lessons. Both creative science and revealed religion find their fullest and truest expression in the climate of freedom. . . .
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> I hope that you will develop the questing spirit. Be unafraid of new ideas for they are as stepping stones to progress. You will, of course, respect the opinions of others but be unafraid to dissent — if you are informed.
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> Now that I have mentioned freedom to express your thoughts, I caution you that your thoughts and expressions must meet competition in the market place of thought, and in that competition truth will emerge triumphant. Only error needs to fear freedom of expression. Seek truth in all fields; and in that search you will need at least three virtues: courage, zest, and modesty. The ancients put that thought in the form of a prayer. They said, "From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truth, from the arrogance that thinks it has all the truth — Oh God of Truth deliver us."[20]

In preparation for this paper, the writer sent out a questionnaire to some fifty prominent L.D.S. intellectuals — all of them, I think, with Ph.D. degrees or the equivalent. I asked them to list the five most eminent intellectuals in Mormon history.[21] Thirty-eight persons responded. Leading the list of those most frequently nominated was B. H. Roberts. Orson Pratt ranked second, Joseph Smith third, Sterling McMurrin fourth, and James E. Talmage fifth. Others mentioned by at least three persons, in the order of their ranking, were John A. Widtsoe, Lowell Bennion, Hugh Nibley, Parley P. Pratt, Ephraim Ericksen, W. H. Chamberlin, and J. Reuben Clark, Jr. Of the twelve persons who were named on the lists of at least three respondents, three (Joseph Smith and the two Pratts) wrote during the first period, while the remaining nine studied and wrote during the "modern" period of creative adaptation.[22]

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[20]President Hugh B. Brown, "What Is Man and What He May Become," address at Brigham Young University, March 25, 1958.

[21]My definition of "intellectual" was framed in such a way that it seemed to exclude natural scientists. This is unfortunate, since a major contribution to Mormon intellectuality has been made by our natural scientists.

[22]The listings, with number of placings on the responses were: B. H. Roberts, 35; Orson Pratt, 30; Joseph Smith, 19; Sterling McMurrin, 18; James E. Talmage, 17; John A. Widtsoe, 14; Lowell Bennion, 11; Hugh Nibley, 10; Parley P. Pratt, 5; E. E. Ericksen, 4; W. H. Cham-

All of the persons named seem impressive, particularly if judged by the quantity of their writings.[23] Roberts published eight books of theology and nine of history, including the monumental six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church* (Salt Lake City, 1930). Though in origin a polemical work, the *Comprehensive History* comes nearer to history than many works done subsequently that professed historicity. Roberts also wrote two volumes of biography, three of sermons and commentaries, and one novel. A leading Democrat, successful missionary, soldier's chaplain, and high church authority, Roberts seems fully justified in being regarded — to use Davis Bitton's phrase — as the pioneer Utah equivalent of Renaissance Man.[24] A less flamboyant contemporary, James Talmage, was also a British immigrant; wrote texts on natural and domestic science for L.D.S. high school students; authored two books on aspects of chemical and mineral geology; published seven books on religion, including the *Articles of Faith* and *Jesus, The Christ*, which are still used as standard texts; and prepared hundreds of articles which were syndicated for nationwide newspaper circulation. Widtsoe, a Norwegian immigrant who grew up in secluded Cache Valley, graduated *summa cum laude* in chemistry from Harvard, studied advanced biochemistry at Göttingen, and became president of Utah State Agricultural College and, later, of the University of Utah. He wrote thirty books, seven of which were in his professional field of agriculture and the remainder on aspects of Mormonism. His pamphlets, study courses, literary articles, and editorials run to an estimated 800 titles.

Three persons still in the mid-course of their contributions to Utah and Mormon intellectuality are on the list: Sterling McMurrin, Lowell Bennion, and Hugh Nibley. McMurrin's listing rests primarily on his erudition and careful reasoning in three works which serve to place Mormon theology and philosophy in perspective: *The Patterns of Our Religious Faiths* (Salt Lake City, 1954), *The Philosophical Foundations of Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City, 1959), and *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City, 1965). Lowell Bennion, a graduate of the University of Vienna with a dissertation on the methodology of Max Weber, has specialized in writing manuals for use in the seminaries, Institutes of Religion, and Sunday Schools. His *Religion and the Pursuit of Truth* (Salt Lake City, 1959), as with

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berlin, 4; J. Reuben Clark, Jr., 3. It is significant that no woman received as many as three listings, and that no apostates were listed by that number. The former is probably due to the failure of historians to call attention to the contributions of women in Mormon history; the latter is perhaps due to the manner in which I worded the questionnaire, asking: "Excluding yourself (and myself), who are the five leading Mormon intellectuals in the Church's history?" I should have thought that Eliza R. Snow, Susa Young Gates, and Emmeline B. Wells might have received more listings, and also Sidney Rigdon, Edward W. Tullidge, George A. Smith, and John Taylor. Of course, each respondent was limited to five listings. Several respondents made notes indicating their perplexity about Joseph Smith. Admittedly, he was a towering and inspiring figure, but was he an intellectual?

[23]Obviously, I could not attempt in this brief essay to judge the *quality* of these writings. Certainly I would not contend that all of the writings of these "intellectuals," if such they be, have (or had) solid intellectual worth. Some would no doubt contend that they stand out mainly because of the barren surroundings.

[24]Davis Bitton, "B. H. Roberts As Historian," *Dialogue*, III (Winter 1968), 26.

all his works, is marked by a warm humanity and humble absence of provinciality. Hugh Nibley, a brilliant graduate in classical languages and history from the University of California, has written a large sheaf of articles for professional journals and Mormon periodicals, and has published five books. Perhaps the one which Mormon intellectuals regard as his most distinguished work is *The World and the Prophets* (Salt Lake City, 1954). "With the passing of B. H. Roberts," writes one of his admirers, "Nibley more than anyone else has assumed the role of defender of the faith and the Saints.[25] One might sum up these three current leading Mormon intellectuals in the following manner: McMurrin is concerned with ideas, Bennion with people, and Nibley with the faith.

It is interesting to note that the top three persons — Roberts, Pratt, and Smith — were essentially self-taught. This should give the modern generation of Mormon scholars ample cause for humility. Considering our enormous advantages, we ought to be making far greater contributions than we are. It is humbling to realize that B. H. Roberts, the top person on virtually everybody's list, was the son of poor English converts, that he crossed the ocean and walked across the plains to Utah when he was only nine years of age, and that he worked on farms and in mines with virtually no time or opportunity for schooling. He apprenticed himself to a blacksmith, achieved some local notoriety as the "village blacksmith orator," and was called to a mission among country people in the Southeast. Eventually, he became a general authority of the Church, was elected to Congress, and produced a respectable shelf of books on varying subjects. Who would have guessed that out of such a background would have come the man whom thirty-five learned L.D.S. scholars would select as the most distinguished intellectual in the Church's history!

Intellectuals such as those listed in the survey perform three functions for the societies in which they live. They provide symbolic and other expressions of the relationship of man to the universe, to God, and to the world of men, they initiate and maintain a flow of helpful suggestions for modification and improvement; and they seek to safeguard their societies' standards of excellence by criticizing low performance. Intensely patriotic in the broadest sense, and often ethical purists, they sometimes find their society failing to come up to its expressed ideals, and thus become disenchanted. Their "apostasy" in such instances is merely an inverted manifestation of their loyalty to the ideals.[26] Honest and frank — perhaps excessively so — they may advocate changes which society's leaders have reasons to oppose; they may point out weaknesses when it is not politic to do so; and they may insist upon standards which society and its leaders (including intellectual leaders) are not able to meet. However much we deplore their occasional lack of tact and humility, we must grant, with Daniel Bell, that, "One can be a critic of one's

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[25]Louis Midgley, "Hugh Nibley: A Short Bibliographical Note," *Dialogue*, II (Spring 1967), 119.

[26]Compare Edward Shils, "Intellectuals," *International Encyclopedia of The Social Sciences* (17 vols.; New York, 1968), VII, 410.

country [or church] without being an enemy of its promise."[27] Since there is substantial agreement that the history of societies which lack social criticism is "in the main a record of stagnation and decline," the nurturing of independent intellectuals is society's way of assuring its future.[28]

All of us who are members of the Academy are favored to be associated with bright and spirited young intellectuals, the most honest of whom sometimes express a fear of "joining the Establishment."[29] They do not want to glide over shortcomings or settle for less than they and society are capable of achieving. They imagine a dilemma to be facing them. On the one hand, if the Establishment rejects them it is guilty of philistinism. On the other hand, if it gives them an honored place it is buying them off.[30]

Surely many sensitive souls in every generation have imagined themselves to be impaled on the horns of this dilemma. By and large, as they mature they learn that close identification with the so-called Establishment (be it Church, State, or Commercial) does not, of itself, involve or necessitate a sell-out to the principles of integrity and creativity.[31] "The intellectual who has relinquished all thought of association with power understands well — almost too well — that his state of powerlessness is conducive to certain illuminations. What he is prone to forget is that an access to power and an involvement with its problems may provide other illuminations."[32]

I hope that the members of this Academy share with me an impression of the growing number of "participating intellectuals" within the Mormon culture. Personally, I have been delighted with the increasing number and improved quality of bright young Mormon intellectuals who are strongly committed to their Church and society, and who are equally committed to sound scholarship in the humanities and sciences. On the one hand, they are determined to work within the best traditions of their culture; on the

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[27]Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Rev. ed.; New York, 1965), p. 17. One cannot deny that some articulate intellectuals abuse their positions and betray doctrinaire and uncompromising attitudes. Intellectuals are susceptible (as we all are) to insidious forces, and may deliberately ridicule the well-meaning and obfuscate the issues. Intellectuals may also lose their relevance by refusing to serve society in a constructive way or to get involved in the "muck and mire" of contemporary organizations and movements.

[28]See Eric Hoffer, *The Ordeal of Change* (New York, 1963, 1967), p. 46; and Stanford Gwilliam, "The Critic in Zion," *Dialogue*, II (Winter 1967), 149–54.

[29]By this they presumably mean accepting a position in the government, the Church, or a large business corporation. As ethical purists they dislike working with imperfect institutions. But can they really know society and its problems without participating actively in its processes?

[30]Compare Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, pp. 393, 417.

[31]One non-Mormon historian friend has suggested in a letter to the writer that the Roman Catholic attempt to consolidate orthodoxy coincided with intellectual decline in Italy — and still more in Spain where orthodoxy was more complete. The Protestant Reformation, on the other hand, brought an intellectual awakening to Elizabethan England. Thomas O'Dea in *American Catholic Dilemma: An Inquiry into the Intellectual Life* (New York, 1958), intimates that the conservative and defensive theology of American Roman Catholicism has tended to produce sterility, while the more liberal Catholic theology in France, the Netherlands, and Germany has produced intellectual brilliance.

[32]Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, p. 429.

other hand, they insist upon the highest standards of integrity in their chosen fields. In recognition of their influence and needs the Church has established semi-autonomous university wards, stakes, and Institutes of Religion where L.D.S. students are able to attain spiritual, social, and intellectual maturity under the most favorable conditions. In responding to the challenge of adapting their faith and its practices to the university setting around them, they remind one of the early converts to Mormonism who, nearly all in their twenties and early thirties, restored a faith and founded a community in the wilderness. A most significant development is the founding of *Dialogue*, whose stated aim is "to express Mormon culture and examine the relevance of religion to secular life." Edited by young Latter-day Saints who wish to "bring their faith into dialogue with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage," the journal encourages a variety of approaches and viewpoints.

In no field has the growing maturity of L.D.S. scholarship been more welcome than in history. An important article by Moses Rischin in a recent issue of *The Journal of American History* describes scholarly developments in Mormon history as "most exciting." The Mormon story is explored, he states, "with a new depth and perspicacity." Recent books and essays represent "a breakthrough in appreciation and understanding of this strategic historic group," and "reflect an intellectual poise, sophistication, and candor that augur a new secularization of the Mormon posture."[33]

No one will deny that our pioneer forebears were worthy builders — that they were adventurous frontiersmen, devoted farmers, and ingenious engineers. But those who redeemed the wilderness and made the desert blossom also included poets, artists, teachers, and scholars. Not only did they perfect society with their well-articulated criticisms, but they created symbols and images of lasting value. May our studies establish the relevance of our intellectual heritage for the present, help us in stating more explicitly our aspirations for the future, and propel us to higher levels of achievement in all our endeavors.

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[33]Moses Rischin, "Beyond the Great Divide: Immigration and the Last Frontier," *Journal of American History*, LV (June 1968), 49. Also: "The most striking changes of all were in the historiography of the Mormons (Latter-day Saints) of Utah, which only recently had seemed divided between the unsympathetic and sometimes malicious accounts of outsiders and the inexorably dull, painfully defensive annals of the Saints themselves. The new generation of Mormon historians related religion to economic institutions, politics, and immigration, all with remarkable objectivity." Earl Pomeroy, "The Changing West," in John Higham, ed., *The Reconstruction of American History* (New York, 1962), p. 78.