Mormon Education in Theory and Practice 1830-1844

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MORMON EDUCATION
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE
1830-1844

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by
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"Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in the world, than any other man that ever lived in it."¹ This statement of 1844, accepted as modern scripture by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, points out the significance of the life of its first prophet to the Church. Inasmuch as the period from the Church's organization in 1830 to the martyrdom of Joseph Smith in 1844 is a basic source of direction for Latter-day Saint thought and activity, it seems appropriate that a study of L.D.S. education be concerned with that beginning.

There has been an apparent lack of historical literature focussed on L.D.S. educational theory and practice during the early period. This lack becomes more noticeable with the continuous increase of students and teachers of L.D.S. church history, corresponding with the increase of the Church's population and influence. It is hoped that this examination of early "Mormon" education will be a worthwhile part of present and future formal research on the subject.

The author appreciates the consideration given by Monroe H. Clark, Howard T. Reid, and B. West Belnap as a thesis committee, and the encouragement from his wife Carol.

¹Doctrne and Covenants, section 135, verse 3. Salt Lake City: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1943.
The BYU library, the L.D.S. Church Historian's office, the Utah Historical Society, and private individuals have been especially helpful through their courtesy in making available source material.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The object of this study is to discover and classify "Mormon" information current between 1830 and 1844 relating to certain basic aspects of educational theory and practice, and to compare the theory and practices. The hypothesis is that there were discrepancies in the theory and the practice.

Procedure

The procedure was to collect data from primary sources such as diaries, journals, and periodicals, in addition to publications such as volumes of scriptures, biography, and history.

Arrangement of the data was to be followed by criticism and analysis in order to determine the appropriate importance of each item. After the listing of the theory and practice in Chapters II and III, comparisons were to be made in Chapter IV. Final discussion in Chapter V was to consider the results with some of the non-Mormon educational setting of the time, and with modern aspects of Mormon education.
Definitions

Mormon.--Taken from the title of a record of ancient American sacred history edited largely by an ancient of the same name, this term is used in the study because of its currency as a sobriquet applied to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or to a member of that church.

L.D.S.--This is an abbreviation for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and refers also to a member of the Church.

Saint.--A Mormon.

Church.--When capitalized, this term refers to the church above.

Salvation.--This term is used to mean the conquest (by God of man) of man's enemies such as death, ignorance, and sin.

Theory.--A system of fundamental principles; a plan.

Delimitations

This is primarily a descriptive work limited to data coming from the period of 1830-1844, or data which apply to that period. There is no conscious attempt to establish or refute L.D.S. doctrines. The material searched to discover L.D.S. concepts in educational theory is limited to the L.D.S. scriptures and the ideas of Church leaders given in the United States, and likewise, the study of educational practice in the

Church is limited to the continental United States. This limitation provides a parallel for orientation with non-Mormon American education.

Related Literature

Bennion's doctoral study, published under a changed title, was the first history of apparent stature to deal with L.D.S. education, and it covered Church education from 1830 to 1939. Education of the early period was discussed under headings of: secondary education in Ohio and Missouri, elementary education in Ohio and Missouri, the University of the City of Nauvoo, music, honorary degrees, and certification of teachers. Attention was given mainly to education of later periods in the west.

Moffitt wrote a history touching the early period, which is used as a basic text for the history of Utah education, and which was focussed on organization and administration legislation. Law's work on school organization and administration is also mainly concerned with education in Utah, but does list several references to education found in the Bible and other L.D.S. scriptures. A collection of Mormon historical source

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2M. Lynn Bennion, Mormonism and Education, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972.


materials by Berrett and Burton is not unlike Bennion's selection of quotations from the early period. Both are admittedly far from being exhaustive, and both works were limited by the evident inaccessibility of some primary source materials. Jensen's early writing is quite limited in sources and sketchy in treatment. Halford's history of Nauvoo furnishes some help with its section on education.

De Boer, a non-Mormon, attempted an impartial doctoral study of Mormon philosophy's influence on education in Utah which shows several criteria of the educational standings of the 18 states. One of the conclusions of his study is that the level of educational accomplishment (in terms of the number of years students remained in school) in Utah schools "was greater than that of any other state." Also of interest is his conclusion that "the zeal for learning which is part of the gospel that the Mormons profess has resulted in Utah's present status of operating the most extensive religious education program in the public schools of any state in the Union."

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Significance is added to this by Bennion's belief that "the educational program of the Church today is a consistent expansion of the theories promulgated by its founders," and by his declaration that "the educational theories of Mormonism were formulated by Joseph Smith, and the models for the school system that later developed in the west were in part set up." Evidently he meant that the bases for the educational theories were formulated by Joseph Smith, for, as Ellsworth points out in his monumental study, "Joseph Smith did not pronounce an ordered philosophy of religion, nor was there during his lifetime a conscious systematization of belief." A doctoral study by McBride on higher education in the Church devotes attention to a comparative study of theory and practice on that level of education, and here is found another statement on the subject: Joseph Smith "laid the religious and philosophical basis upon which almost all practice in the Church today is derived." A new doctoral work by Rich takes an ambitious step


toward the systematic statement of part of Mormon educational theory. It was not available in final form at the time of this writing, but a late draft indicated an involved and lengthy discussion and restatement in the areas of metaphysics and epistemology. No comparison is made with educational practices, or with non-Mormon theory.

In the attempt to discover the Mormon religious thought basic in the derivation of Mormon educational theory, the writer has found the scriptural works of the church to be the best sources.
CHAPTER II

MORMON EDUCATIONAL THEORY

The educational theory of the Mormons in this early period were not necessarily detailed corollaries of the elements of Mormon dogma. There was found to be no authoritative system of thought (constructed from their basic ideas and doctrines) which covered the areas of educational theory. Their recorded expressions, by comparison, were rather brief and fragmentary, and usually were applied to specific problems.

Christians for ages had been familiar with the statements in the Proverbs that "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew."¹ But perhaps none of them drew out the inspiration for learning that the saints did as a result of their belief in the Mormon doctrine: "Whatever principle of

¹Proverbs 3:19-20
intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.\textsuperscript{2} Faith in the prospects of eternal progression in partnership with the Lord was a strong motive power in the Mormon pursuit of education.

\textbf{Administration}

There was no doubt in the doctrine as to the availability of knowledge, because the Lord was in charge of the Church. In that sort of a situation, "What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it upstream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints."\textsuperscript{3} As for the leaders of the Church, it was stated in the Lord's "preface" to the Doctrine and Covenants that His purpose was to the effect that "Inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed;...and inasmuch as they were humble they might

\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Doctrine and Covenants}, 130:18-19.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, 121:33.
be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time. 4

In the revelation outlining the scope of knowledge to be pursued, there is given an elaborate procedure for the conduct of the primarily ministerial "school of the prophets." 5 The procedure provides for careful order, with unity of devotion and with humility, sobriety, and unselfishness. This arrangement was not mentioned specifically in available sources describing plans for other schools.

Bennion quotes from the Nauvoo city charter the paragraph authorizing the University of the City of Nauvoo for the teaching of "the Arts, Sciences, the Learned Professions" under the control of "a board of trustees, consisting of a Chancellor, Registrar, and 23 regents." 6 From a different source 7 it was discovered that the paragraph mentioned contained the additional significant information that the board was one of perpetual succession. The same act authorized the city council to "establish, support, and regulate

4 Ibid., 1:26,28.

5 Ibid., 88:127-137; 119-122. A prophet, according to Joseph Smith, was someone who had a testimony of Jesus, and the presumably applied to all elders.


common schools," which authority the city council promptly transferred to the university's board. A proclamation of the Church's presidency (in the strongly Mormon community) advised that the regents would set up an articulated system which would take care of all levels of schooling. This was early in 1841—about three and a half years before the prophet's death. Most of the regents were men of considerable authority in the Church (including Joseph Smith); the registrar was in the presidency; the chancellor was John C. Bennett, a medical doctor who had "held a professorship in Willoughby University, and who in Nauvoo was also the first mayor, an officer of the Masonic lodge, and second in command of the city's large militia. At that point it seems questionable whether such interlaced administrative structure is more of an asset or a liability to any organization involved which might have vested interests. At any rate, Dr. Bennett appeared to have a creditable academic

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background.

The problem of accrediting teachers may have been lessened somewhat in the minds of believers in the Book of Mormon, which declares that, among the gifts of God, "to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom; and to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit."\(^\text{11}\) In the school of the prophets, as Bennion points out, the only requirement for teaching was holding the priesthood, as each of the class took a turn at leading it.\(^\text{12}\)

In the face of the demands of change of residence, of missionary service, and organizing communities, there were determined plans to provide buildings or rooms for schools. The most notable example of this is the school of the prophets, to be built under divine command and to house also strictly religious functions.\(^\text{13}\) Another example is part of Sidney Rigdon's speech made at Far West, Missouri during a celebration on July 4, 1838, in which he described their plans for a temple there: ... "The first floor will be for sacred devotion, and the two others, for the purpose of

\(^\text{11}\) Moroni, 10:9-10.


\(^\text{13}\) Doctrine and Covenants, 88; 105:33.
education. The building to be one hundred and ten feet long and eighty feet wide. Apparantly, few records of such plans for school facilities are now available.

Teaching

The aspects of teaching which were found to be mentioned as ideas were views on curriculum, methods, and objectives. This excerpt from the Church paper in Missouri illustrates the dual course of study aimed at all members: "The disciples of Jesus Christ should teach their children, not only in common learning to transact business among men, but in the knowledge of God." A second article adds some practical details for children to learn: "...to wash themselves; to comb their hair; to be mannerly, and obedient; to be industrious; to be meek and charitable; and above all, to pray vocally and in secret..." In an announcement by the trustees of the Kirtland School for young ladies and gentlemen, their plan to introduce "the higher branches of English literature, at as early a period as possible" was made known. There was a much more ambitious curriculum outlined for the University of


15 Evening and Morning Star, I:186-7.

16 Ibid., I:154.

17 Messenger and Advocate, I:80, quoted in Bennion, p.20.
the City of Nauvoo (as mentioned in the previous section),
but it is not clear what was originally meant by the arts,
sciences, and learned professions.

An article under the title "Knowledge is Power" was
printed in the Nauvoo Times and Seasons and signed by the
editor, who was Joseph Smith, as follows:

The truth of our text can be proved in many ways,
by experience. The man of intelligence certainly
possesses a power which the unlearned lacks. In the
different ages of the world men have arisen and flour-
ished, and maintained their rights in proportion to
the knowledge they possessed of the country they in-
habited; in proportion to the knowledge they acquired
in arts and sciences; and in proportion to the know-
ledge they displayed in agriculture, and virtue;
hence the duration, the stability, and above all, the
exaltation and happiness of any community, goes hand in
hand with the knowledge possessed by the people, when
applied to laudable ends; whereupon we can exclaim like
the wise man; righteousness exalteth a nation, for
righteousness embraces knowledge and knowledge is power.

From this view of the subject it will readily be
perceived, that two kinds of knowledge have, from the
beginning, actuated mankind; for all men have not been
righteous, though they may have flourished in nations,
kings and kingdoms, and countries, collectively and individually.

To go on, then, with our subject in its true course,
will be to speak of that knowledge that cometh from
above—which surpasses understanding; even revelation,
which unfolds the mysteries of eternity. In this course,
however, we are aware that the world will not acquiesce;
for, notwithstanding, that all knowledge comes from God,
yet when it has been revealed all men have not believed
it as revelation at the time. 18

Here are expressed some of the basic doctrinal traits regarding the value of learning virtue and practicing virtue along with a more worldly knowledge.

In his inaugural address of February 3, 1841, Mayor Bennett of Nauvoo took to task what he considered to be the inadequate education then prevalent by the use of a quotation. He said:

The following observations in relation to false education, from Alexander's Messenger, so perfectly accords with my feelings and views on this highly important subject, that I cannot do better than incorporate them in this message.

Among the changes for the worse, which the world has witnessed within the last century, we include that specious, superficial, incomplete way of doing certain things, which were formerly thought to be deserving of care, labor and attention. It would seem that appearance is now considered of more moment than reality. The modern mode of education is an example in point. Children are so instructed as to acquire a smattering of everything, and as a matter of consequence, they know nothing properly. Seminaries and academies deal out their moral and natural philosophy, their geometry, trigonometry, and astronomy, their chemistry, botany, and mineralogy, until the mind of the pupil becomes a chaos... This mode of education answers one purpose—it enables people to seem learned; and seemingly, by a great many, is thought all sufficient. Thus we are schooled in quackery, and are early taught to regard showy and superficial attainments as most desirable. Every boarding school Miss is a Plato in petticoats, without an ounce of that genuine knowledge, that true philosophy, which would enable her to be useful in the world, and to escape those perils with which she must necessarily be encompassed. Young people are taught to use a variety of hard terms, which they understand but imperfectly—to repeat lessons which they are unable to apply—to astonish their grandmothers with a display of their parrot-like acquisitions; but their mental energies are clogged and torpidified with a variety of learned lumber, most of which is discarded from the brain long before its possessor knows how to use it. This is
the quackery of education.

The effects of the erring system are not easily obliterated. The habit of using words without thought, sticks to the unfortunate student though life, and should he ever learn to think, he cannot express his ideas without the most tedious and perplexing verbosity. This is, more or less, the fault of every writer in the nineteenth century. The sense is encumbered with sound. The scribbler appears to imagine that if he puts a sufficient number of words together he has done his part; and, alas! how many books are written on this principle. Thus literature, and even science itself, is overloaded with froth and flummery. Verbalizing has become fashionable and indispensable, and one line from an ancient author will furnish the materials for a modern treatise.'

Continuing, with his own remedy for the situation,

Dr. Bennett said:

Our university should be a 'utilitarian' institution--and competent, industrious, teachers and professors, should be immediately elected for the several departments. 'Knowledge is power,'--foster education and we are forever free! Nothing can be done which is more certainly calculated to perpetuate the free institutions of our common country, for which our progenitors 'fought and bled, and died,' than the general diffusion of useful knowledge amongst the people. Education should always be of a purely practical character, for such, and such alone, is calculated to perfect the happiness, and prosperity of our fellow citizens--ignorance, impudence, and false knowledge, are equally detestable,--shame and confusion follow in their train. As you now possess the power, afford the most ample facilities to the Regents to make their plan complete; and thus enable them to set a glorious example to the world at large. The most liberal policy should attend the organization of the University, and equal honors and privileges should be extended to all classes of the community.19

This appears to be the most emphatic statement given during this period among Latter-day Saints in favor of purely utilitarian education and against "false knowledge" or "a smattering of everything" as "moral and natural philosophy," geometry, 19 Joseph Smith, History of the Church, IV:289-291.
trigonometry, astronomy, chemistry, botany, and mineralogy. The utilitarian curriculum proposed is evidently to be associated with the objectives of freedom, happiness, and prosperity.

A brief statement of objectives is found under "Cultivate the Mind" in the Evening and Morning Star of June, 1832, evidently written by Joseph Smith. By way of introducing a series of selected articles, he wrote "Man was created to dress the earth, and to cultivate his mind, and glorify God. It, therefore, cannot be amiss for us, at this early period, to urge the disciples of our Lord, to study to shew themselves approved in all things... We select the following article... as worthy of a place under this head." This is followed by an article on the value of education by "the Reverend Dr. Kidu" of Aberdeen. 20 During the winter of the Nauvoo university's first year of operation, a school announcement was accompanied by the advice that "a finished education always gives an influence in cultivated society, which neither wealth nor station can impart or control: let those, then, who desire to be useful in their day, come forward at once, and matriculate in some department of the university, that mind may grapple with

mind in seeking after hidden treasures."

At that time the departments included Languages, Church History, and Mathematics and English Literature.

Seven or eight years earlier, amidst the more limited educational offerings of Kirtland, Ohio, a newspaper article addressed to "Young Men of Kirtland" (and possibly written by the prophet), on the cultivation of the mind stated:

"It is an error which perhaps may take years to eradicate from the minds of many that our present school systems are the only mediums through which instructions or education may be obtained; whereas it ought to be generally understood, that, though common schools are of vast utility, the man who would be wise, must be in a greater or less degree essentially and positively his own preceptor. There never yet existed a learned man who was not a prodigy of industry and economy in time saving. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

...We must improve our leisure moments in perusing good books, in calculating and extending the operations of our own minds, and in acquiring that intelligence which can alone fit us for acting with honor to ourselves and usefulness to our country, that our names may be hailed by posterity among those of the benefactors of mankind, where we now recognize that of a Franklin, a Jefferson, and a Fulton.... Improve your intellectual faculties by untiring research and investigation...."

This is a case of encouragement given to informal education on a permanent basis rather than as a stopgap measure. It was followed by an article encouraging the education of females.

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Methods encouraged in education by the Church include the general guide within a previous quotation from the Doctrine and Covenants which suggests that learning be sought "by study and also by faith," inasmuch "as all have not faith." 23 Joseph Smith in the History of the Church cautions: "It is not wisdom that we should have all knowledge at once presented before us; but that we should have a little at a time; then we can comprehend it." 24 During 1844, a series of three articles appeared in the Times and Seasons addressed to parents and containing careful explanations of sound psychology in gaining the confidence of children and in discipline, as well as discussions of the proper use of love, natural opportunities for lesson teaching, and the powerful effects of example. 25 Strict observance of the divine law of health, together with the observance of "the commandments" brings the promise of not only physical health, but of wisdom and great treasures of hidden knowledge. 26 This indicates a role of the individual learner in improving methods of learning.

23Section 88:118.
24Joseph Smith, History of the Church, V:340.
25Vol. V:452, 467,486
26Doctrine and Covenants, 89.
Informal Education

Concepts relating to informal education in addition to those above are represented by the strict responsibility laid upon parents in the stakes of Zion to teach their children to understand the basic means to the greatest good by the time the children are eight years old,\(^{27}\) and by the projected museum for which was requested "anything that has a tendency to throw light upon Geology, Mineralogy, Anatomy, Philosophy, Mechanics, or anything calculated to...give general information."\(^{28}\)

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 68:25-28.

\(^{28}\)Times and Seasons, IV:201.
CHAPTER III

MORMON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The belief of the saints that the Lord would pour knowledge upon them without hindrance from men was well grounded, because the revelations to the Prophet constituted impressive evidence to that effect. As far as Latter-day Saints were concerned, the Lord was doing His share of promoting the cause of His kingdom on the earth. The main deterrent to the cause was the foolishness of men.

Administration.—The divine encouragement for the education of the saints reached their ears in many ways such as those listed in the previous chapter, but that was sometimes not enough. In an epistle written during his long and miserable stay at liberty prison, Joseph Smith wrote that "...Ignorance, superstition and bigotry placing itself where it ought not, is oftentimes in the way of the prosperity of this Church..."¹ On the other hand, Gunn's study indicated that "there was never a time, even in these darkest days, when the members of the Church were left without the

stimulating influence of formal education."²

It was not learned how carefully the prescribed procedure was followed in the Kirtland School of the Prophets. Other schools in Kirtland evidently had no such prescribed procedure, but it is interesting to note that according to Gunn, "Co-education was sponsored from the first. The women attended the Hebrew School side by side with their husbands."³

The class learning Hebrew fended for themselves pending the engagement and arrival of a Dr. Piocatto, who was released by then after they "ascertained that he was not qualified to give us the knowledge we wished to acquire of the Hebrew,"⁴ and three weeks later the "celebrated" Hebrew teacher, "a man of excellent understanding" and knowing many ancient languages, began to teach —much to the Prophet's satisfaction.⁵ A Grammar of the Hebrew Language by Moses Stewart was one of the texts of the class. Under "Errata" in the fourth edition of this work there appears this interesting note: "After the printing of the preceding


³Ibid., p. 78.


⁵Ibid., Pp. 356, 385, 396.
work was finished, an unexpected opportunity occurred of submitting the whole to the keen and practised eye of Mr. Joshua Seixas; who being a Hebrew by birth, and the son of a Rabbi, has such a knowledge of the Hebrew language as may be called vernacular." After six weeks with the students in Kirtland, Professor Seixas declared the class was "the most forward of any class" he ever instructed for the same amount of time.

A year previously, a "school for the Elders" was attending lectures on theology, which "absorbed for the time being everything else of a temporal nature." Apparently there were at least four similar schools in Kirtland: the school of the Elders, the school of the Prophets, the Kirtland High School, and the Kirtland School. It is not clear whether all of them existed at the same time.

Under the date of 14 October 1835, Orson Pratt writes: "In December I taught an evening grammar school in Kirtland, also during the winter studied Hebrew about eight weeks; received a certificate from Professor Seixas, testifying to my proficiency in the language, and certifying to my capabilities to teach the same," indicating his rapid learning ability.


8Ibid., p. 176.

This is one of the few mentions found of the academic training had by a person so active in teaching in Church schools during that period.

In the rapidly expanding city of Nauvoo there was a problem of providing enough common schools of good quality. In her extensive study of Nauvoo, Halford claims that scores of individuals "assigned studies and heard recitations," implying that it was something less than teaching.\textsuperscript{10} This is reflected in the journal of Jesse N. Smith, who, between the ages of seven and ten years, "went to school" to six female school teachers in that area. The only book he mentioned was a \textit{Book of Mormon} which the Prophet gave him "to read in at school."\textsuperscript{11} The mushrooming private "schools," often held in homes, was due to the fact that cooperative efforts for regular schools were slow in developing. One J. M. Monroe, in announcing the opening of his school, stated that it was being done "by the advice and concurrence of the Twelve" to teach, in addition, adult evening classes in grammar, writing, and composition. However, schools were not all individual, private ventures. A common school house was constructed in the autumn of 1839, after which the High Council immediately "selected Samuel Dent, Davison Hibbard, and Davis Dort to supervise the studies, the instruction, and the instructor."\textsuperscript{12}


There were other ways in which the duly constituted officers in control of all school matters (the chancellor and regents of the university) exercised their authority for the young people: a city ordinance passed on their recommendation 15 February 1841 declared "All persons and establishments whatever, in this city, are prohibited from vending whiskey in a less quantity than a gallon, or other spirituous liquors in a less quantity than a quart, to any person whatever, excepting on the recommendation of a physician duly accredited, in writing, by the "Chancellor and Regents of the University of the City of Nauvoo." 13

Buildings for the university were planned, but never constructed. Rich states that plans for textbooks and certification of teachers also were "hardly under way" before the mob-killing of the Prophet caused the abandonment of those projects, just as in Missouri the mobs had prevented many educational plans from being carried out. He adds, however, that the diaries of this period indicate that schools were improvised and the children educated at every opportunity." 14 McBride agrees that persecution was responsible for the lack of buildings, and Haldorf asserts that a lack of city funds blocked construction. 15 It appears probable, in the light

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of directly destructive mob activities and economic harassing tactics, that both factors are part of the difficulty. Although there were about five years of settlement there before the martyrdom occurred, at least one other prominent building besides the temple was unfinished at that time.

One concrete action taken by the Board of Regents to standardize the common schools was the official adoption in 1842 of certain textbooks, and at the same time excluding the official use of all other elementary school books.16

A noteworthy administrative success of a decade earlier in Kirtland is indicated in the circular letter sent to all the branches of the Church to solicit subscriptions for the construction of the Kirtland temple, and for the aid of the Elders wishing to attend the school. It said in part: "The subscriptions are now in circulation among us,...and not one brother among us, as yet, refuses to exert himself to do something in a temporal way to bring about the establishing of this house and school..."17

Teaching.—During the early days in Missouri, the apostle Parley P. Pratt conducted a school one day a week in the open air, spending the remainder of the week visiting several branches. 18 The curriculum is not clear in his

autobiography, but a blessing in "expounding all scriptures and mysteries to the edification of the school, and of the church in Zion" is promised in a revelation given in the summer of 1833. ¹⁹

The range of Orson Pratt's academic offerings is indicated in the following advertisement from The Wasp:

Orson Pratt, professor of mathematics and English literature, in the University of the City of Nauvoo, most respectfully announces to the gentlemen and ladies of this city and vicinity, that he will commence his regular course of instruction in the various branches of education, pertaining to the Department over which he has the supervision, on Monday, the 26th day of September, AD 1842, at a building situated a few rods north of the temple.

Tuition per quarter.
For Reading and Writing..........................$2.50
For Geography, Grammar and Arithmetic...........$3.00
For Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Algebra,
  Geometry, Conic Sections, Plane Trigonometry,
  Mensuration, Surveying, and Navigation...........$5.00
For Trigonometry, and Analytical Geometry........$7.50
and for the study of the Differential and Integral calculus, and Newton's Principia.............$10.00

City of Nauvoo, Sept. 12, 1842.²⁰

Lyceums groups became popular in Nauvoo, as evidenced by an excerpt from the Journal of Wandle Mace:

Our lyceum was composed of 18 members and each presided over the meeting in turn; this gave all the members a like experience in conducting a meeting. Some one principle of the gospel was chosen as a subject and each member had an opportunity to speak upon the subject, half an hour being allotted to each speaker. Three evenings were allotted to each subject before another was touched. At the commencement of the school the new members could only use a few minutes

¹⁹Doctrine and Covenants, 97:5.
of their time, being unused to public speaking and because they must confine themselves to their subject. Before the winter was gone, however, they would occupy all their half hour and keep the subject in hand.21

At the conclusion of his report to the Church on "The Kirtland School in February, 1835, William E. McLellin mentions the reason he recommends the school "to all those whose circumstances and situations will allow them to attend:"because it is a place where strict attention is paid to good morals as well as to the sciences."22 More details of curriculum in Kirtland are recorded in the Prophet's journal history entry of 1 January, 1837:

...In the evenings the singers met under the direction of Elders Lyman Carter and Jonathan Crosby, Jun., who gave instruction in the principles of vocal music.... During the week the 'Kirtland High School' is taught in the attic story, by R.M. Hawes, Esq., professor of the Greek and Latin languages. The school numbers from one hundred and thirty-five to one hundred and forty students, divided into three departments--the classic, where languages only are taught; the English department, where mathematics, common arithmetic, geography, English grammar, writing, and reading are taught; and the juvenile department, the last two having each an assistant instructor. The school commenced in November, and on the first Wednesday in January the several classes passed a public examination in presence of the trustees of the school, parents and guardians, and their progress in study was found of the highest order."23

Informal education.--Obviously it is not likely that one would find records of individual education or other types

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of informal education after 110 years. According to McBride, "great stress has always been laid on the private and informal group study of books and pamphlets.... In Nauvoo, periodicals and books were published in great numbers." 24 An examination of the official Church organs reveals the fact that much of their service to the readers amounts to education of one kind or another, with a bit of news thrown in. Also, specific articles containing unusual discoveries or guides to self-improvement often occur.

In October, 1842 there was an article under the heading "Extracts of History" and signed "JS" which explained the purpose of the feature: "It is not incompatible with the revelations of the Lord to become acquainted with nations, histories, governments, laws, and men, and things in general; wherefore, as time and circumstances may offer opportunity we mean to extract what may answer to instruct, and perpetuate the rules and ways of righteousness." 25 In another edition of this paper, a report of newly discovered ruins of civilization in Yucatan was followed by the comment:

Speculation upon the origin of these ruins I leave to others. The subject is one that should excite the deepest interest in the minds of Americans. It is as yet wrapped in profound mystery, which it will doubtless require many years of laborious research to unfold." 26

26 Ibid., Vol. IV, P. 16.
Also found in the *Times and Seasons* is a well-known proverb used as a filler which strikes close to education: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."\(^{27}\) An issue published near the Missouri frontier carried this reminder of culture: "Mental pleasures never cloy; unlike those of the body, they are increased by repetition; approved of by reflection, and strengthened by enjoyment."\(^{28}\)

The value of the press to the Church is indicated by the constant use made of periodicals by early Church leaders. In the absence of bound works of modern revelations, the papers performed the critical functions of carrying such material, along with epistles and proclamations. The first edition of *The Evening and The Morning Star* carried the following bit of orientation: "The Star office is situated within twelve miles of the west line of the state of Missouri:—which at the present is the western limits of the United States, and about 120 miles west of any press in the state...."\(^{29}\)

The projected Nauvoo museum (see p. ) evidently received its initial push from a voluntary donation of some appropriate material. The editor (Joan Taylor) who published the brief request from Joseph Smith asking for more donations

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was not content to see what would come of the original announce-
ment. Taking considerable inspiration from the large museum
which he had toured in England, he became eloquent concerning
the breathtaking impression that such a cultural treasure
could be, and with some wisdom, wrote "We would recommend to
the Elders that are travelling, either on this continent or
any other, to pay especial attention to this subject." 30
Whether or not the missionaries brought much home in the way
of objects, they could hardly avoid bringing their new ideas
and experiences home. Missionary activities deserve recogni-
tion as an effective two-way system of informal and formal
education.

CHAPTER IV

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF PRACTICE TO THEORY

The materials of the previous two chapters are now to be considered on a comparative basis, insofar as they lend themselves to comparison. Part of the hypothesis of this study was that there were discrepancies in the theory and practice.

Failure

The enthusiastic plans for erection of a temple of learning and worship at Far West, Missouri did not reach fruition. The ground was dedicated, but the Mormons evacuated their settlements in the vicinity before the building was begun. It is not the purpose of this writing to affix blame for this failure, or to evaluate the factors concerned in reasons for the migration which was made to Illinois.

Another failure of note was the fall of Nauvoo, Illinois, or more properly, its failure to rise to the stature of its vision. In this case the plans were to build and staff a University for the teaching of the "Arts, Sciences, and Learned Professions," together with a comprehensive school system to accommodate all grades. Delays in developing the university and in obtaining adequate cooperation for public school building and teacher certification finally were eclipsed by the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and subsequent evacuation.
Disagreement

The purpose of the establishment of the university in Nauvoo was not elaborated from the quotation above in available documents, but the vigorous inaugural address of Mayor (and Chancellor) John C. Bennett left little room for one to doubt his view of the proper objectives for the university, and for education as a whole. His low regard for disciplines of philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, geometry, and trigonometry was not shared by Orson Pratt, if one may judge by Pratt's Courses of instruction in those particular subjects. The differences were not complete, because Pratt also offered courses closer to the Chancellor's utilitarian heart.

Another source of disagreement with Bennett's educational philosophy was John Taylor's editorial in behalf of the museum of Nauvoo, in which he urged the collection of anything that could throw light on certain fields, including two (philosophy and mineralogy) which were blacklisted in Bennett's speech.

Agreement

The unusual procedure laid down for the School of the Prophets was not in evidence elsewhere in its entirety, but one aspect of it carried over, or perhaps was duplicated without intention in Nauvoo evening Lyceums. The group with which Wandle Mace met was a good example of the procedure in which each person has a turn before the group, without interruption. It is probable that both groups intended to develop poise in speech, and succeeded in doing so.
One of the common schools built under public auspices in Nauvoo is recorded as filling its part of the city's school plan with the selection of three men to supervise its curriculum, its instruction, and its instructor. The adoption of standard books also helped.

The desire to have teachers competent in academic training was satisfied in the person of Orson Pratt. Although his formal education evidently was short in length, it was long in depth, and his prodigious work in self-education was rewarded with an Honorary M. A. degree from the University of the City of Nauvoo. He was given a certificate testifying of his ability to teach Hebrew at the close of an eight week course in the subject from a recognized scholar of the language, professor Seixas. The professor's skilled service to the Church was likewise a source of accreditative pride. Elder Pratt had an advantage over the scholar in the eyes of Church doctrine, however, by virtue of his priesthood and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Another well-laid plan was that for the Kirtland Temple and its combination of educational and spiritual functions. The plan worked into thorough fulfillment, and the facilities were used to the limit until the prophet migrated to Missouri after widespread apostacy.

The physical and spiritual regimen of health known as "the Word of Wisdom" appeared to have two good results shown in the study. One was the unprecedented progress of the students of Hebrew, as remarked by Professor Seixas. The other
was the action of the Nauvoo city council in prohibiting the unrestricted sale of liquors. The values derived from the application of this plan would be difficult to determine and at the same time could be extensive.

The ideal type of curriculum described as common learning plus a knowledge of God evidently found expression in the "Kirtland School," according to McLellin's report that strict attention was paid to both good morals and the sciences.

The value of Church periodicals as mediums of education was shown by many articles and editorials on subjects of wide interest. The missionary system, such as it was then, was also a potent source of education, with the subtlety of the missionaries acquiring an education, or "broadening" without trying.

The self-teaching through untiring research and investigation which was urged on the young men of Kirtland was already demonstrably effective in the illustrious examples of such men as Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt, and Joseph Smith. Young Jesse N. Smith, who was the Prophet's cousin and neighbor in Nauvoo, evidently drew inspiration of this kind. Although having only a short common school education, he became a voracious reader, and was often described by Heber J. Grant as a man who had forgotten more than Grant would ever know.¹

¹Verbal account given by Hyrum Smith, son of Jesse N. Smith. Also see Journal of Jesse N. Smith, Op. Cit.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary

This study was made with the hypothesis that there were discrepancies in the theory and the practice in Mormon education. Data from authoritative sources were classified into a presentation of educational theory in terms of specific plans or projects. These were described in Chapter II as theory and in the following chapter the corresponding practice, if found in the study, was likewise described. Distinguishable aspects of the ways in which practice corresponded with the theory were discussed in Chapter IV, where it was found that in most cases the practice agreed with the theory—with a notable exception involving a disagreement on curriculum between John Bennett and two other high officials of the Church, John Taylor and Orson Pratt. Bennett's public opinions showed no affection for the broad and abstract array of courses which were taught and studied by Pratt, or for the research encouraged by Taylor.

Problems

The failure of plans for education at Far West and Nauvoo was evidently due to a complex set of factors involving persecution, backsliding, and possibly several others.
An intensive study of the factors relating to these two incidents and other occasions of major migrations of Mormons might constitute a worthwhile formal investigation.

The disagreement evident between Orson Pratt on one side and John C. Bennett on the other was a disagreement of individuals, so far as the data showed, because there was no official statement on the matter from the presiding councils of the Church, although it could be inferred from the later date of Pratt's curriculum that the Church authorities, having influence with the Nauvoo university, preferred his interpretation of a proper curriculum. It is interesting to note that all of the fields of study eschewed by Bennett are taught now at Brigham Young University and other schools of the Church. In the light of Bennett's apostacy, which occurred a few years later, his strong divergent view might be taken to be a symptom foreshadowing a later conflict which culminated in active antagonism toward the Church. On the other hand, if Bennett's speech be considered as merely an emphasis of the more immediately practical educational pursuits, it may not have been particularly divergent in view. At least, an influential opinion among Church leaders later was in favor of emphasis on practical or vocational education. For example, among the few studies made mandatory for students at Brigham Young University by the founder was the study of mechanics or what now might be called manual arts.\footnote{McBride, \textit{Ibid.}, appendix.} Inasmuch as this emphasis has received modern support from an educationally prominent
official of the Church, there may be value in a formal study that might show a more complete and integrated picture of what now appears to be a long-standing issue among the leaders.

The self-taught lyceum groups of Nauvoo are echoed at the present time by some Sunday evening "fireside" groups in the Church, while other fireside groups are more similar to the old American lyceum which relied heavily on guest speakers. This type of group may be a significant one to be included in a study of informal education during the history of the Church.

It might be considered an anomaly that the Church, while placing so much emphasis upon its particular view of life in education, has sometimes hired non-Mormon teachers. In the case of Joshua Seixas' instruction in Kirtland, this was evidently a stopgap measure only, due to a lack of adequately trained teachers within the infant Church. Even today, in a few fields, this practice is still current, and avowedly for the same reason. The reason for this practice today appears to be due to an expanded range of curriculum, extending into areas where few seem to be competent.

The intensively sacred preparation and approach to each day of learning as known in the Kirtland school of the prophets is evidently not practiced generally in the Church today, although a less intensive approach is commonly recommended by Church authorities in place of the complete absence of a prayerful attitude.

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2John A. Widtsoe, address in The Church News, January 11, 1941.
While the education derived from association with people of different cultures may have been (and still is) a significant by-product of missionary service, a more direct and significant educational feature of this service is the integration of ideas into action which accompanies the service. This may be seen in any activity engaged in by Church members, including the widespread lay leadership as well as the common opportunities for non-leadership activity in such projects as the Church Welfare Program.

Although there is no justification to state (in the absence of a detailed study) that the Mormons carefully followed any particular school of educational thought, there were two general aspects of Pestalozzi's method which were in harmony with the Mormon beliefs: the consistent love shown in handling children, and the use of well-defined object lessons. Froebel's concept of the teacher's proper role as a passive protector of an unfolding soul was also compatible with L.D.S. attitudes concerning the protection, but the active attitude of a proselyting faith having a new treasure of scripture to disseminate was more compatible with a more authoritarian method that Froebel would have liked. Books of good reputation in the East at the time were found to have been sought out for L.D.S. schools. Thenationally popular lyceums, or informal adult education groups were similar to those at Nauvoo. Inasmuch as converts came from many parts of Europe and America, there seems to be no particular reason to believe that there was a special influence on Mormon education coming from
one of these sources, although there may have been a general influence toward the broadening of educational interests. A careful comparison of Mormon and other American theory and practice in education during the period of this study might be useful in establishing significant differences and similarities.

Likewise, there may be worthwhile significance to be found in studies of comparative aspects of Mormon education and other American education during the past two decades, and in similar studies comparing Mormon education with the educational theory and practice of other religious organizations.

The centralization of the administration of many schools within an institution of higher learning, as planned for the University of the City of Nauvoo, finds some counterpart in the recent unification of the Church school system under the Brigham Young University. A study in organization and administration might profitably focus on this arrangement of structure and function.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that the hypothesis is true: that there were discrepancies in the theory and practice of education in the Mormon Church between 1830 and 1844. They indicate also that there were more cases in which there was agreement between the theory and the practice than cases in which there was discrepancy. Three cases of discrepancy were found, one of which was a disagreement of people,
and two of which were cases of the failure of plans to be carried over into practice. Reasons for this type of failure are evidently complex, and might be useful information if discovered in a thorough study. There were three cases of discrepancy between theory and practice, and nine cases of agreement between theory and practice.
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APPENDIX A

A Series of Three Articles from the Times and Seasons, V. 5, 1844, P. 452.

TO PARENTS

Could parents only appreciate the ceaseless round of good that would result from the proper cultivation of the human while in the infant or juvenile state, the grand bane of virtue and happiness, the web of fashion and indifference, is probably not so perfectly interwoven with all sense of the duty and privileges of our race as to cause them to forego the use of any lawful means for the consequent prevention of an almost incalculable amount of shame and needless suffering. But even while in consideration of so desirable an object as the universal honor and happiness of mankind, the necessity of the proper cultivation of the youthful mind is admitted.

It would be impossible to organize a complete system to apply successively, as the rule of action in all particular cases in the government of children; for as children differ in temper or turn of mind, so must the rule of particular mode of government of children, for as children differ in temper or turn of mind, so must the rule of particular mode of government of children, for as children differ in temper or turn of mind, so must the rule of particular mode of government of children differ also. Nevertheless, there are some general rules that will apply in all cases; and such was the Apostle Paul's manner of instruction to parents; hence he says: "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."
This rule will apply in the government of all children, and accordingly, no child should be punished for a crime, until he is first made sensible that he has done wrong; otherwise he will be angry, believing he had been punished without a just cause, and if such a course be persisted in, the child would soon become discouraged, or weary of trying to please or obey, and even resort to deceit and treachery, to revenge or shun his parent's power. In order to avoid this and other difficulties, the parent should never suffer himself on any occasion, however trifling or however important, to deceive or to lie to his children. This rule, although it is almost universally violated, can easily and reasonably be pursued, for there is no occasion wherein falsehood or deception is needful to make any requisition or permission profitable for children; and it will be found much easier to amuse and please them without the use of any false means whatever; in fact this is the only way by which children can be made always to delight in your voice and presence, or in your precept and example; and there is no danger of the discouragement or anger of your children, under your corrections or require-
ments, if they find that they always meet with truth in your words, and justice in your conduct towards them, but on the contrary will consider themselves guilty in the violation of your orders, and worthy to be punished accordingly. This is a just principle, and children are not so ignorant of the nature of right and wrong, as to confide in those who trifle
with the, or lean upon the arm that deceives them, but will struggle to the extent of their knowledge and power to be free from such influences.

HEMONI

p. 467

TO PARENTS

The parent who contemplates the honor and happiness of his children, and hopes to seal through them a reflection of glory back upon his own name, will first, not only learn the most judicious rules to apply by way of precept in his purpose, but also study to know himself virtuous and upright, as far as human liability will permit, and the nature of the case requires; for a man must be able to govern himself, before he can rule well even his own house. But notwithstanding the excellency of example in the government of children, it could not be duly appreciated by them without corresponding precept or commandment, may be rendered doubly effectual with children, if it is connected with some circumstances to make it interesting to them; for instance a gift, to confirm the sincerity of your anxiety in their welfare, or a promise of gratification in some favorite and innocent amusement. But in the line of parental duty; if the example did not follow in the fulfilment of the promise made, or a want of constancy and virtue should betray a lack of interest in their welfare—no matter how just the requirement, and necessary for the cultivation of pure principles; for the child finding himself again and again disappointed, will listen with
reluctance, or turn with disgust from the voice of command, and nothing encouraged in his faithfulness, will comply from necessity and fear, if at all and not from a sense of duty, pleasure or respect.

Children are generally strict observers of the words and actions of mankind, even before they are able to understand their meaning, and not unfrequently, innocently to imitate what they see done, or hear said, no matter poisonous in its character, or loathing in its influences over their minds. This relates more particularly to the earliest period of life, when children are more directly under the care of the mother, and which is the very time when the most permanent formation of character takes place. . . . What then, that is virtuous, and amiable and refining should not the mother possess to be duly qualified for so important a trust?—Nor is the father in any wise exempt; for, as he is the head to direct, and the chief to command, and the prince to reign in the lovely empire of his family; and naturally possessing a deeper research of mind, a more profound judgment, and a more skillful understanding; let him apply his wisdom to control, and according to the principle of virtue, every influence that shall pass in all the realm of his own house. . . .

Finding that the mother holds so important a stand in the government of children, there is no source of infor-
mation, whether it is by council, (sic) or by instruction, or by obedience, that she in wisdom could neglect, so long as she is able thereby to attain to one single spark of the fire of virtuous influence in the court of her little family.

HEMONI

p.486

TO PARENTS

One grand principle in the government of children is, for the parent to have equally as much or more interest for the welfare and happiness of his children, than they themselves have. Another is, to convince them by an example of virtue, and the display of superior wisdom, that he is competent to stand as their counsellor, and worthy to rule in their conduct; and a third is, to administer justice and judgment with an even temper and an equal hand in all cases under his parental jurisdiction and power. . . . The minds of children are more flexible and attractive, while in infancy, and may then be more easily and successfully influenced, . . . and no time need be lost for want of age, for all their infant sports and amusements may be made so many instruments of instruction to their tender minds; and their toils and disappointments, and their numerous changes and mischievous experiments to which they often resort, are no less than so many opportunities to begin to plant in their minds the deed of true nobility and greatness; for it is by the convincing power of experience, in connection with appropriate instructions in every passing incident that comes under their
notice in these early hours, that their character and notion
of things begins to be contracted. . . .

Parents should therefore, not only possess an
interest for their children, but let it be manifest suf-
ficiently to secure their confidence that no good thing will
be withheld that is possible for them to have. The perform-
ance of this part of parental duty calls for a liberal exercise
of the attributes of love and kindness which awaken a spirit
of affection and forbearance in the mind, and overlooks the
errors and faults of children, and also gives patience an
(sic) pleasure to listen to their numberless little in-
quiries, and to serve their innocent demands. The faults
of children however, should not always be overlooked,
nor should they be. . . punished when they cannot other-
wise be rendered faithful and obedient. . . . No fault
should be forgiven that the child will not confess, nor
punishment inflicted without a sense of guilt. . . . rise
up and shake off the trembling power of the fashions, and the
binding chains of indifference, and listen to the voice of
wisdom. . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . notwithstanding, that in love and kindness is
possessed the spirit of indulgence and forgiveness; and
virtue and wisdom is able to direct and reprove; yet with-
out judgment and justice, all the reproofs and counsels,
and the forgivenesses and indulgences that may be given to
children would fall fruitless to the ground; so far as their willing obedience and faithfulness and their happiness and welfare is contemplated: for, the reproofs of the virtuous, and the counsels of the wise would be trampled down with impunity; and the excess of indulgences and pardons, that mercy and affection would lavish out, could find a consummation of their work only in dissipation and ruin. But, by the additional and united exercise of justice and judgment, all the evils of consequent from the want of power, would meet with a deserved end; and the judicious allotment of a proper degree of love and kindness, and the counsels and reproofs that virtue and wisdom dictate, be aided by the just and legal enforcement of every requirement, until by patient endurance in the faithful exercise of every principle of parental duty, the father may gain the inspeakable reward of living to see his sons rise up and fill their different places of honor and usefulness in society; and the mother to behold her daughters shining like the polished stones of a palace, fitted and adorned with virtue and intelligence, to shed forth the cheering rays of civil and religious prosperity and happiness over the face of the whole earth; and the name, and the glory, and the honor thereof shall roll onward for ages and ages, and ages to come.

HEMONTI
APPENDIX B

Advertisement from The Wasp, a Nauvoo newspaper edited by John Taylor. (V. I. #36, 7 January 1842)

Books! Books!! Books!!!

The subscribers have just received a quantity of books of various descriptions, of which are the following:

School Books


Also


All of which will be sold by the subscribers at their Book Store in the Printing Office, cheap for CASH.

TAYLOR & WOODRUFF

Nauvoo Dec. 25, 1842
MORMON EDUCATION
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE
1830-1844

An Abstract
of a Thesis Submitted to the
Department of Philosophy and History of Education
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Virgil Bushman Smith
August, 1954
ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to discover and classify "Mormon" ideas current between 1830 and 1844 relating to educational theory and practice, and to compare the theory and practice. The hypothesis is that there were discrepancies in the theory and the practice.

The data were taken from periodicals, diaries, journals, biographies, histories, and the scriptural works of the Church, and arranged according to educational theory as distinguished from educational practice.

Mormon educational planning did not include an elaboration of the basic theology into a complete educational theory. The expressions of theory were rather brief and fragmentary, applying to specific problems. It was considered the duty of parents and Church leaders to promote the education of those under their charge with all means available. Both the curriculum and the objectives of their formal education included a strong flavor of religious and moral instruction—in fact, in the real sense a division between secular and religious education was thought to be artificial. The education of Church members out of reach of formal educational opportunities as well as those in school was not considered to be limited by their formal studies. Individual initiative was vital in obtaining the best educational growth, and it
was to continue throughout life, if continual progress was to go on.

The educational practices in the Church were not always on a par with the ideals which were often expressed in describing the proper cultural advancement which was to be achieved by the Church. There appear to have been unusual and complicated factors influencing the discrepancies between the vision and the achievement of education, but analysis of this problem is not part of the purpose of this thesis. In most cases, it appeared that the practice agreed with the theory with one notable exception involving a disagreement of Orson Pratt's educational activities with the educational objectives of John C. Bennett, concerning the same school.

The findings of this study indicate that the hypothesis is essentially true, although it was false in many cases. Three cases of discrepancy supported the hypothesis, and nine cases of agreement between theory and practice showed the hypothesis to be untrue in those instances.

Several marginal studies were suggested by the study.