

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 10

Joseph Fielding Receives Word of the Missionary Work in Bedford

To compound Joseph Fielding's feelings of loneliness, a letter arrived from Bedford from his sister Ann Matthews on Saturday the 25th of August, 1837. Joseph said:

[Ann wrote] in great Grief of heart, because she had understood that I had pronounced an Anathema on my Brother James. [Her letter showed] that she and her husband entirely reject our Message, so I am now as a Stranger in my Native land, and almost to my Father's House. . . .May the Lord help me to stand fast in the Liberty of the Gospel and my Calling.¹

Ann's letter began, "My Brother in the Flesh, In great grief of heart I take up my pen to write you. . . ." Ann mourned that Joseph had "rejected the doctrines" he had been taught in his youth. Ann prayed that his eyes would be open so he "could see the error into which you have fallen."²

Fortunately, a letter written by John Goodson during this period survives.³ Brother Goodson and Elder Richards arrived in Bedford on Wednesday, August 2nd, and that same evening met with Timothy Matthews. Not long afterward Brother Goodson wrote Isaac Russell in Alston:

We arrived in Bedford,⁴ called on Mr. Matthews and conversed for about three hours. He expressed himself quite satisfied with our testimony. He had a meeting of his Church the same even'g, which meeting he gave up to us. I addressed the people, and at the close Mr. M. exhorted the people to believe. We met with his Church every even'g the remainder of the week, during which he kept growing in the faith.

It was so ordered of the Lord, that his wife was from home, and did not return till Saturday, at which time he was almost ready for baptism. He is still waiting for her, and I don't think it will be many hours before they are baptized. At first she was quite high, but we united in calling upon the Lord that his hand might be upon him, and it fell upon them both in body and mind, so that she is now partly humble and almost ready.

Eight days after our arrival, I had the satisfaction of baptizing five, two more have since come in, and there are some scores who will follow Mr. M. I yesterday baptized perhaps the finest man I ever saw out of the church, who has been taught of God and not of man for the last three years. We met with our little band yesterday and broke bread. I addressed them, and we had a season which repaid us for coming to this country.

I preached very comfortably last week in a room hired by Mr. M. One even'g while I was reading from the covenants of the Lord, a Methodist priest offered to show the people some errors. When I was through I gave him liberty. I answered his objections, and he was glad to make his escape. I have likewise met with a learned clergyman who is much conversant with Egyptian records. The Lord gave me such wisdom and boldness that his learning was of no service to him at all.

Ann Fielding and Her Husband Timothy Richards Matthews Reject the Missionaries

During this period Elder Kimball felt a prompting to leave Walker Fold where he had been preaching at John Richards' chapel. Upon returning to Preston, he found a letter from Willard Richards in Bedford, and another from Isaac Russell in Alston describing their missionary efforts.⁵

Five years later Elder Richards would write about his arrival in Bedford:

[He and Elder Goodson] arrived in Bedford on the 2d, having letters of introduction to the Rev. Timothy R. Matthews from Brother Joseph Fielding (Mrs. Matthews' brother,) they immediately waited on Mr. Matthews, who expressed great joy at their arrival, and manifested his sincerity by walking arm in arm with the elders through the streets of Bedford, calling on the members of his church, and inviting them to attend the lecture of the elders at his chapel vestry that evening. Mr. Matthews had previously been apprised of the Saints in America, through the medium of the Rev. James Fielding, of Preston, and the letters from America. . . .In the evening, his church assembled in the vestry, and elders Goodson and Richards continued to lecture and testify of the work of God, on that and the three following evenings in the same place, with the entire approbation of Mr. Matthews, who at the close of the lectures publicly bore testimony to the truths advanced, and called upon his people to know why they did not come forward for baptism; while they in return wished to know why he did not set them the example.

After this, Mr. Matthews engaged another house in the neighborhood for the elders to preach in, under the pretense that some of the proprietors of the chapel might not be pleased with the elders occupying the vestry, and Mr. Matthews continued to attend the preaching of the elders, and also spent a great share of his time, from day to day, in conversation with them.⁶

Willard noted that Reverend Matthews told them he had received two ordinations to the priesthood. One had been from a man who Timothy later believed to be without authority, so he sought ordination from the Church of England. Perhaps he was referencing his reversal from preaching reformed doctrine to returning to the national church. In any case, Timothy told the two Mormon elders, perhaps in context of discussing authority, which is a strong tenet of Mormon doctrine, that "he had no authority from God for administering in the ordinances of God's house."

Brother Richards continued:

On the 10th [of September], Mrs. [Ann] Braddock and four others were baptized by Elder Goodson. Soon after this, Mr. Joseph Saville,⁷ a member of Mr. Matthews' church, being very desirous of receiving baptism at the same time with Mr. Matthews, waited on him at his house in company with Elders G. and R., and Mr. Matthews and Mr. Saville mutually agreed to meet the elders on the bank of the River Ouse, at a specified hour in the afternoon, and attend to the ordinance of baptism.

At the hour appointed, Mr. Saville met the elders at the place previously designated by

Mr. Matthews; but as he did not make his appearance according to promise, after waiting for him an hour, Mr. Saville was baptized, when the elders repaired to Mr. Matthews' to learn the cause of his not fulfilling his engagement, and were informed by Mr. Matthews' family that he had gone out in the country to preach.⁸

In a day or two it was currently rumored that Mr. Matthews had baptized himself, and this rumor was afterwards confirmed by Mrs. Matthews, who stated to Elder Kimball, at Preston, Mr. Matthews had baptized himself, reasoning upon this principle within himself, 'If I had authority to administer the sacrament to my people, why not have authority to baptize myself?' and all this after Mr. Matthews had acknowledge to Elders Goodson and Richards that he had no authority to administer in the ordinances. . . .

Willard then concluded:

From that period Mr. Matthews. . . [preached] faith, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, the second coming of Christ, etc. etc., adding one thing to another. . . from those doctrines which he had heard from the Latter Day Saints, but it was some time before he arrived at that heaven daring conscious seared hardihood, to lay hands on those whom he had baptized for the reception of the Holy Ghost. . . . Thus has Mr. Matthews been running about from Bedford to Liverpool, from Liverpool to Northampton, from Northampton to Bedford, and other places, crying aloud in public and private [against the Mormons and yet at] the same time preaching the same doctrines. . . .⁹

No doubt Reverend Matthews's actions were seen as a violation of his probationary terms and he was no longer allowed to preach as an Anglican minister.

Orson F. Whitney, the biographer of Heber C. Kimball, had access to Heber's original journal which contained more information than the journal published in 1840 by Joseph Fielding's brother-in-law Robert B. Thompson. In his personal notes, Heber wrote:

Forty of [Mr. Matthews'] members went forward and were baptized, and the time was appointed when he was to be baptized. In the interval, however, Brother Goodson, contrary to my counsel and positive instructions, and without advising with any one, read to Mr. Matthews the vision seen by President Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, which caused him to stumble, and darkness pervaded his mind. . . .

Elder Kimball did not mention that Timothy Matthews baptized himself, but instead reported that Timothy visited a Baptist minister, the Reverend William Giles,¹⁰ and asked for baptism under his hands. Elder Whitney wrote:

From that time he began to preach baptism for the remission of sins, and no longer walked with the Saints. However, a great part of his members left him and obeyed the truth, and in a letter which he wrote to his brother-in-law, the Rev. James Fielding, he stated that 'his best member had left him.'¹¹

Elder Goodson's letter of August 14th mentioned William Giles. He had received word from the

missionaries in Preston that Reverend Giles was trying to prevent James Fielding's members from leaving his congregation. Mr. Giles was offering baptism in a font in a nearby chapel to keep the new LDS converts from being baptized in the River Ribble:

We have rec'd one letter from Preston with the joyful tidings that twenty-six had been confirmed after partaking of bread and wine, and two others had been baptized who were not present. Mr. Fielding to prevent his people from embracing the gospel, had recourse to the following manoeuver. He agreed with Mr. Giles a Baptist preacher (one of those against whom we washed our feet) to come and examine them and baptize them if they wished it. Our brethren told the people that they must not be baptized by a man who had rejected the servants of the Lord. This produced the desired effect. The appointed time for examination arrived, and Mr. Giles began to question Mrs. Leech. She replied that the Lord had told her not to go into the waters of strife, but there was a river which should make glad her heart (because they were going to baptize in the font in the Chapel). She also told him that he must repent for rejecting the servants of God.

Elder Kimball made an observation about James Fielding and Timothy Matthews:

Those gentlemen, with their congregations, were I believe diligently contending for that faith, which was once delivered to the Saints at the time we arrived, but afterwards rejected the truth. Yet, notwithstanding [that James and Timothy] did not obey the gospel, the greater portion of their members received our testimony, obeyed the ordinances we taught, and are now rejoicing in the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant.¹²

Ann Braddock, a widow whose children were living in other homes as servants because of her poverty, invited the missionaries to live with her, at some sacrifice. She was the first person baptized in Bedford. She later emigrated with other converts and crossed the plains with her daughter Augusta in Willard Richard's 1848 pioneer company.¹³ Joseph Saville died in 1840, but his widow Rhoda emigrated to Utah, received her ordinances in the Endowment House, and is buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.¹⁴

Eight verses of revelation received by Joseph Smith between 1828 and 1830 included the theme of the field being white, ready for harvest.¹⁵ It is clear that the centuries preceding the arrival of the missionaries were filled with the efforts of good men and women who were seeking the gifts of the spirit and the truths which were taught in the New Testament. From the well-known William Tyndale who translated the Latin Bible into English, to the little-known Methodist preacher Joseph Entwistle who changed Rachel Ibbotson's heart, the field was being sowed. In 1837, the field was indeed white and ready for harvest.



William Tyndale was among the many early ministers who prepared the way for the LDS missionaries in England.

Ann Matthew's letter indicated that Elders Goodson and Richards had washed their feet against Timothy Matthews, indicating they had fulfilled their responsibility to preach the gospel to him and

were now freed from his sins.¹⁶ Ann used the word “Anathema,” not a common LDS word today. Ann and her husband saw the action as a curse.

Missionary Work Spreads in Preston

Open air meetings were held in Preston during the late summer months, with about forty members. On Thursday, August 24th, Joseph Fielding wrote his feelings in his diary about those around him who were rich and had abundance. As he interacted with those seeking gospel truths, Joseph became very concerned about the ministers and wrote:

[They] teach for hire, and the Prophets divine for Money, yet they say, ‘Is not the Lord among us?’ . . .The People here are many of them poor, and not many rich will come in at the straight gate. . . .I feel this Day as much as ever my own weakness, when I look around on the wickedness of the world, the rich and the learned, lifted up in the pride of their hearts, rolling in affluence, heaping treasure together for the last days. . . oppressing the hireling in his wages, & saying who is the Lord, that I should obey him. . . . As for my flock . . . the poor suffering want, laboring as for the Wind, living in Ignorance and Poverty When I ponder these things in my Mind, I think, Oh, that I had the Mind, and the Voice of an Angel, I might cry aloud and spare not, that I might reprove the World of Sin, and cry repentance to this Generation. But this is my consolation, I will do what I can. My heart yearns over the poor and the meek of the earth.¹⁷

Early in September Joseph observed:

We have been successful. . .We have now in Preston upward of 50 baptized into the new and everlasting Covenant. They are nearly all poor; if others come in it appears the poor will be first. They have the least to sacrifice. The Shepherds are beginning to think seriously; many are looking into their Bibles, of which they know but little.

Joseph commented on the strength of his associates:

Elder Hyde has great Power in his Preaching, etc. The Spirit is poured upon him abundantly. He is very faithful and diligent, as also is Brother Kimball. . . .We have now the Privilege of preaching in a large Building [which is] convenient. [It was] at first built for the Purpose of Cock fighting, by a Man of wealth, but has not recently been used for that Purpose. The present Proprietor is a great advocate for Temperance and uses it for that Purpose.¹⁸



Joseph was describing the Cock Pit, a building used for cock-fighting until 1830

The Preston Cock Pit was used as temperance hall for preaching after cock-fighting was banned in England.

when the game was banned. Preston was well-known for its temperance societies, of which Martha was an advocate, and for a time this location hosted their meetings and the missionaries referred to it as the Temperance Hall. Periodically the Mormons were able to rent this building.

Isaac Russell Stumbles as a Humble Missionary

In mid-August John Goodson wrote Isaac Russell from Bedford after receiving a letter from him in Alston. He began by saying:

I rec'd yours and lose no time in answering. It does not appear to me that you have met with any thing that might not have been expected, or anything that should be allowed to trouble you for a moment. I awaken a deep interest by our discourse, in as much as we can expect in this age of universal darkness. I do not doubt but that when this reaches you, deep conviction will have taken the place of deep interest in the breasts of many. Seek wisdom, brother, for that is what you are most deficient in. That is what I want, and what we all want.¹⁹

Two weeks later John Snider, who had been serving with Isaac Russell in Alston, returned to Preston. There he met with Elders Kimball and Hyde and told them that Isaac had refused to let him preach any sermons at all. Orson Hyde was asked to reply to Brother Russell. In his letter to Isaac he said in part, "If Bro Snider tells correctly, 'thou are the man.'"

From Orson's letter, it is clear that Brother Russell was going from village to village preaching without taking any time to nourish the listeners or to build up a small branch. Elder Hyde wrote:

Let me now tell you what to do, teach repentance and baptism to the people, and commence baptizing them, for the Devil would be glad to make you put off Baptism as long as possible, and if possible not baptize at all.²⁰

Elder Hyde continued:

We are not surprised at all that your way has been hedged up by the priests. We have told you repeatedly that if you would leave the priests alone, you would prosper. The plain fact is, the priests hold the people under their control and it is our business to gather out the honest in heart from under this bondage. . . . It is not our business to gratify a disposition to face down upon the priests. But it is our business to save souls, and we do say in the name of the Lord, let the priests alone and preach the simple Gospel of Christ.²¹

One passage in particular was enlightening as to how these early missionaries were operating:

Bro. Russell, do you consider that you have gone contrary to our instructions: We laboured diligently with you before you left here to impress upon your mind the necessity of preaching the Simple Gospel to the people and to Baptize them, and then teach them all other things necessary. If a teacher teach his pupils, he brings them into the house first and then teaches them. So you ought to preach repentance and bring them into the Church by baptism in the first place; and then instruct them into those truths which are

calculated to strengthen and edify. When you or any other man goes forth to preach the gospel, you ought to abide in one place and continue preaching there until the people receive or reject. If they reject it, go wash your feet against them and go along to another place, and there do likewise. But if they believe your testimony baptize them and gather a little branch, then call a conference and have them set in order. Then go on to another place. And not give the devil power, after you have sown the seed, to come and take it away before it takes root. The Smith would be quite unwise if he would have half Dozen irons all heated at one time and laid upon different Anvils in different places, and take his hammer and strike one, then go and strike another, for while he was going from one to the other, his iron would be getting cold all the time.

Elder Hyde concluded his letter with these reassuring words:

Don't think that Bro. Snider has been prejudicing our minds against you. No this has not led us to write as we have. We will be accountable for all we write ourselves. Bro. Kimball has gone into the Country to visit a little Church which he has raised up there. But gave me instructions what to write to you before he left. He went this forenoon. The work rolls on well here. I have just returned from the water from Baptizing four persons. Last night 10 persons came forward for Baptism to be administered on Sunday morning next. I will pray for you. And will you pray for us and write to us soon. No. 21 Pole St. Preston, Love as Ever, Orson Hyde.

Joseph Fielding wrote in his journal, "Bro. R has not gone exactly according to the directions given him by Bros. Kimball and Hyde or he would have been more successful. We find that while we go just according to the Word of the Lord we go well."²² By the end of the month Isaac would be presiding over a small branch in Alston, indicating that he had heeded Elder Hyde's advice from September.²³

In fact, Isaac's preaching went so well that "he was offered a large salary if he would accept a position as a preacher in the Episcopal Church, which he promptly refused, preferring to teach the truth without purse or scrip."²⁴

Missionary Work Progresses in Preston and the Surrounding Areas

On September 11th, Joseph Fielding wrote that "90 have received our testimony in Preston and its vicinity. . . . The people are flocking to hear. . . Sunday Elder Kimball is again gone to Walker Fold," after having received another invitation to preach. "We have baptized 3 Men today from Longton, several leading Men of their Societies have been baptized. . . [and] almost all my Bro. James's congregation."²⁵

Joseph added that his brother-in-law Timothy Matthews would soon be arriving. Family letters indicate that James and Timothy often shared each other's pulpits and perhaps the Reverend Matthews was traveling to Preston to buoy up James's congregation.²⁶ Joseph wrote:

I have written three very plain and faithful letters to Mr. and Mrs. Matthews and do not see what I can do more for them. James says my conduct, i.e., my coming here to oppose

my Brother, has made Religion stink in the Noses of the sensible and intelligent of the Place, and I must not wonder that he is not friendly with me. I told him I was content to suffer in such a Cause.

Sister Martha is still kind, though she cannot manifest as she would. Sister Ann Dawson, a widow in whose house we are lodging, is exceedingly attentive and kind to us, a very diligent Woman, may the Lord keep her and bless her. We have not yet wanted for any thing.²⁷

This comment in Joseph's journal indicates that the tensions had become so severe between him and James that Joseph had begun rooming with Elders Hyde and Kimball.

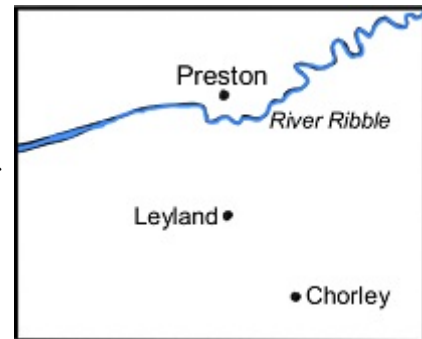


Although the missionaries had not spoken to the British Saints about gathering to America, Joseph knew that time would come. He wrote:

Ann Dawson lived at 21 Pole Street in this row house, which no longer stands.

The People are poor. To take them out of this country will be much like taking the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and will require the same power and Wisdom. Perhaps the Fate of who shall be left will be little better than that of the Egyptians.²⁸

Missionary work continued in North America. Joseph Smith had spent several weeks in Canada, "preaching, baptizing, blessing the Saints and strengthening the branches," before returning to Kirtland at the end of August in time for a conference in early September. Shortly after that, the leaders of the Church traveled to Far West for a conference to be held there in November.²⁹



Joseph Fielding and John Snider, who appears to have remained in Preston after returning from Alston, were sent five miles from Preston to Leyland where they found a preacher who had seen Orson Hyde's pamphlet, "A Timely Warning." The two missionaries spoke to a congregation and were followed by this minister, who, according to Joseph, violently opposed them and their doctrines. Joseph wrote:

Joseph Fielding and John Snider proselyted in Leyland and Chorley, within 10 miles of Preston.

Most were disgusted with him. We made some reply, but he was so outrageous that we could hardly speak. . . but the Lord turned it to good. The next morning one of the best of his flock called upon us and appeared to like our preaching, and on leaving us put two shillings into our hands.



The same minister foiled their next teaching appointment, but

The Preston Temple, with a spire reminiscent of ancient Saxon structures, was dedicated in Chorley in 1998.

the people were so offended at his actions that they arranged for another venue.

The minister again showed up and challenged them to drink poison and then heal themselves. The man worked himself into such a rage that the people insisted he leave, which he did.³⁰

The two missionaries then headed to Chorley where two hundred people listened to them. Although opposed, “some were attracted to the Truth which we preached.”

Upon returning to Preston, they found John Goodson, who had returned from Bedford. John reported that “the work there is very prosperous. Elder Richards is there in charge of the little Church.”³¹ Surely there would have been other news, and Joseph likely immensely enjoyed visiting with him and hearing about old friends and his sister Ann’s family. However, there would have been serious concern at this time, for both John Goodson and John Snider had determined to leave their missions early.

John Goodson and John Snider Return to the United States

In early October of 1837 John Snider and John Goodson headed for Liverpool to return to Kirtland. Brother Goodson took with him two hundred copies of the Book of Mormon which the missionaries had brought with them to England. The idea of these books leaving England was against the strong desires of Elders Kimball and Hyde.³² These were books John Goodson had published and likely paid for himself. The remaining five missionaries tried to scrape up enough money to buy as many copies as possible from him, but the rest he took with him, hoping he would be able to sell the books back in the States and recover his investment.³³

Joseph Fielding wrote:

I think they should not have gone and Elders Kimball and Hyde believe so too. . . Bro. G. has some old enemies in London, but he wanted to go home. Bro. Snyder has some business at home but not pressing. He had never spoken much in public, had not much liberty, and was discouraged. May the Lord yet bless them and make them useful in his Church.³⁴

John Goodson would ultimately leave the Church, but John Snider would remain faithful, settling in Missouri and then in Nauvoo with the Saints.³⁵

The departure of these two missionaries can be linked to problems occurring in Kirtland.³⁶ A financial panic had swept the United States. Many banks, including the Kirtland Safety Society, in which many Mormons had invested, was failing. Persecution against Joseph Smith and the Church, not only in Kirtland but also in Missouri, was increasing and some very faithful men who had been with the Church from its organization, left or were excommunicated, such as Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses who saw the Angel Moroni and the gold plates.

Two months earlier, Joseph Smith had met with Brigham Young and other church leaders in Far West and had chosen to move forward in building a temple there.³⁷

Five Missionaries Remain in England

The departure of Brothers Goodson and Snider left five missionaries in England: the two apostles and Joseph Fielding in Preston; Isaac Russell in Alston, and Willard Richards in Bedford. Even at this early date, these missionaries were being assisted by recent converts, which was also the pattern in Canada.

Elder Kimball wrote:

Although we were deprived of the labors of these brethren, yet the work of the Lord continued to roll forth with great power. The news of our arrival in [Preston] spread both far and wide, and calls from all quarters to go and preach were constantly sounding in our ears. We laboured both night and day that we might satisfy the people who manifested such a desire for the truth as I never saw before. We had to speak in small houses, to very crowded congregations, or else to large assemblies in the open air. Consequently, our lungs were very sore and our bodies considerably worn down with fatigue.³⁸

The Missionaries Encounter Robert Aitken

Joseph Fielding wrote:

There are now but three of us in Preston but we are much united. . . We are just informed that a popular Preacher last night in his Pulpit said we were the Devil's Conjurers. . . His Name is Aitkin. . . . He never once heard us preach and yet he thinks himself qualified thus to judge of it.³⁹

A native of Scotland, Mr. Aitken formed a Christian Society in Liverpool in 1835 and boldly taught of the need for spiritual gifts which should be part of the Lord's true church. One historian⁴⁰ wrote that "He seems to have been almost a Whitefield in his eloquence and magical influence over the people. He was emphatically the most popular 'new light' of the period in England."⁴¹

Heber C. Kimball wrote of their success with Robert Aitken's followers, saying:

Soon after our arrival in England, great many of the Aitkenites embraced the gospel, which caused considerable feeling and opposition in the ministers belonging to that sect. Having lost quite a number and seeing that many more were on the eve of being baptized, one of the ministers came to Preston and gave out that he was going to put down 'Mormonism,' expose the doctrines and overthrow the Book of Mormon.

He made a very long oration on the subject, and was very vehement in his manner, and pounded the Book of Mormon, which he held in his hands, on the pulpit a great many times. He then exhorted the people to pray, that the Lord would drive us from their coasts, and if the Lord would not hear them in that petition, that he would smite the leaders.

The next Sunday Elder Hyde and myself, being in Preston, went to our meeting and read the 13th chapter of Corinthians. We strongly urged upon the Saints the grace of charity. . . and took the liberty to make some remarks on the proceedings of Mr. Aitken. . . . In return for his railing, we exhorted our people to pray that the Lord would soften his heart and open his eyes, that he might see it was ‘hard to kick against the pricks.’ The discourse had a very good effect, and that week we had the pleasure of baptizing about fifty into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, a large number of which were members of Mr. Aitken’s church.⁴²

The Reverend Timothy Matthews referred to Robert Aitken as “his son,” as both men persecuted the LDS Church and its missionaries.⁴³ Joseph Fielding wrote that his brother James “is united with others in opposing us. He is very bitter.”⁴⁴ Today, Robert Aitken is known for his antagonism against the LDS Church after his followers left his congregations and joined the Mormons.

On October 7th, after returning from a second trip to Leyland, Joseph wrote:

The work is still going on well. Not only is the number increasing, but the Saints are increasing also in the Spirit. Those who learned something of God before [now] say they have free access to God. There is no veil, nothing in the Way; their Hearts are enlarging, their Faith is increasing, they look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ with confidence. . . We are still preaching in the Cock Pit. Great numbers attend. We are expecting to ordain some to the office of Teacher and to go into the towns and villages around, and so to extend the work.

A few days later he wrote:

Aitken exhorted his People to unite in fervent prayer that we might be stopped or removed from the place. . . but at the very time he was thus talking, the Lord was pouring out his Spirit in a remarkable manner on some few of us [who] met together at Mary Leache’s house.⁴⁵

Accusers challenged the right of the missionaries to preach, saying they needed licenses. The missionaries discussed this with a lawyer, John Richards, the son and namesake of the Walker Fold minister. He assisted them in acquiring licenses to preach and refused any compensation.⁴⁶

At this point, late in the fall of 1837, the missionary work became so productive that the three Preston missionaries began appointing those from their congregations to assist and lead. Elder Kimball recorded the name of one man in particular, Francis Moon, who had recently joined the Church.⁴⁷

The branch in Preston was divided, the first of many times, becoming the oldest continually existing ward in the Church today.⁴⁸ Local men, all new converts, were called to preside over smaller congregations during the week for prayer meetings. They all met together on Sundays in the Temperance Hall, where they received the sacrament. In addition, several ministers had joined the Church.

Joseph wrote:

[We fasted and prayed] that we may obtain more Influence over the Powers of Darkness. They are all exerted to darken our Minds and to hinder the World, and the whole Armour of God is in requisition. There is not a society in Preston, or about it, as we are informed, but what is opposing us and complaining of our influence in their Churches.⁴⁹

Joseph wrote of a great meeting which the missionaries held on Sunday, October 8th. About one hundred and forty met at the Temperance Hall, partook of the sacrament, and then several were confirmed members of the church and others were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood. He named George Watts and Peter Melling as two who were ordained to the office of teacher.

Peter Melling, a fifty-year-old Preston native, would remain a stalwart member of the Church, and in 1840 would be called to be a patriarch.

Chapter 10 Endnotes Pages 149-160:

1. Joseph Fielding Diary, Page 10.

2. This letter, dated August 20, 1837, from Bedford, is the first in the Joseph Fielding Correspondence Folder held at BYU's Special Collections, MSS 670. While Ann wrote in the first person and referred to her husband, the handwriting indicates that the Reverend Matthews wrote the letter.

3. This letter was dated August 14th, 1837, and was written by John Goodson in Bedford to Isaac Russell in Alston. The letter is well-written, clear and easy to read, with good vocabulary and strong penmanship. Brother Goodson was full of faith as he shared wise words of truth and inspiration to Brother Russell, who was apparently struggling in Alston. This letter is part of the Isaac Russell Collection, and is preserved in the Special Collections Vault at BYU, MSS 497.

4. John Goodson's letter clearly and legibly states that they arrived in Bedford on "Wednesday the 9th." However, Elder Richards recorded that they arrived on the 2nd, although I am reading a published transcript, not his actual account. The missionaries were set apart to their respective fields Monday night July 31st and departed Preston on Tuesday, the 1st. An arrival in Bedford on the 2nd would have only been possible if they had taken the train or traveled by carriage, and I'm not sure train travel along that route was possible in 1837. When Joseph took the train to Bedford in the summer of 1840, his travel time was ten days, but he preached along the way. I checked the Bedford membership records which show that the first baptism was for William Whithead Smith, born in 1774, on 1 August 1837. The elders were not in Bedford on the 1st in any case, so that record was likely back-dated and isn't much help. The next records are for September. The baptisms John mentioned were apparently not recorded. Elder Richards mentions that Sister Braddock was baptized on the 10th, which doesn't fit well with an arrival on the 9th. However, John Goodson clearly said that eight days after their arrival he baptized five. Eight days after the 9th would be the 17th, and the letter was written on the 14th of August. I am forced to go back to Elder Richards' account and trust the date of the 2nd, that somehow, perhaps by carriage, they traveled the 185 miles to Bedford in less than two days.

5. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 24, "I was warned by the spirit to return to Preston, and there found that I was anxiously expected by the brethren, who had received a letter from Brother Richards, and one from Brother Russel, which gave an account of their proceedings since they left Preston."

6. Mission to England from *Times and Seasons*, Volume 3, pages 879-884, under the date of August 15, 1842. This document is easily found online by searching for any phrase from the quote.

7. According to Bedford Conference records, Film #86979, Joseph Saville and his wife Rhoda were in their early thirties when they were baptized on the 16th of September 1837 by Willard Richards.

8. History of the Church, Volume II, page 506. Joseph Smith received word of this event and his scribe wrote, "Timothy R. Matthews, having investigated the work, acknowledged the truth, and having previously borne testimony of the same to his church in public, and urged them to go forward, agreed with Elders Goodson and Richards to meet them on the bank of the River Ouse one hour before sunset and be baptized. The hour and the Elders arrived, but Mr. Matthews was not there."

9. Mission to England from *Times and Seasons*.

10. Truth Will Prevail, pages 76, 94, 95, 115.

11. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 24; The Biography of Heber C. Kimball by Orson F. Whitney, page 149. An interesting note comes from the History of the Church, Volume II, page 505. "The Elders at Bedford continued to lecture in the basement of Mr. Matthews' chapel from evening to evening, with the most flattering prospects until this evening [August 4th], when Elder Goodson, contrary to the most positive instructions of President Kimball, and without advising with any one, read publicly the vision from the Doctrine and Covenants, which turned the current of feeling generally, and nearly closed the door in all that region. Mr. Matthews wished the meetings to be removed from his house, but continued to attend the meetings occasionally and investigated the subject to considerable extent."

12. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, pages 24-25.

13. History of the Church, Volume II, page 506, "Elders Goodson and Richards baptized five at Bedford, among whom, and the first, was Mrs. Ann Braddock, a widow, who was obliged to support her family by her industry, yet she received the Elders and lodged them." I could find two of Ann's daughters on the 1841 Bedford Census, Clementina and Augusta, living as servants. While I could not find Ann, I did find her 1843 ship record with Alfred, Matilda and Augusta. Matilda and Alfred did not leave St. Louis for some time, where there was a large branch of the LDS Church. Ann and her daughter Augusta crossed the plains in 1848 with Willard Richards' pioneer company. He was the man who had baptized her and likely was determined to assist her. Augusta became a plural wife of William Clayton and raised a large family. Ann died in Salt Lake City in 1872.

14. I felt it important to see what had happened to some of the earliest members in Bedford. Rhoda Saville had a son just before her husband died. It appears he was baptized but did not remain in the LDS Church. Rhoda remained faithful and emigrated in 1869 on the steamship *Colorado* and then rode trains across the United States to Utah. In 1871 she received her endowment in the Endowment House and then was sealed by proxy to her husband Joseph. She died in Salt Lake City in 1872. The opportunity to provide other ordinances for her husband was not available during her lifetime, so I asked my husband to be the proxy to finish those.

15. I have been deeply touched as I have worked on this biography and have begun to realize how hungry British citizens were for gifts of the spirit and for fulfillment of prophecy concerning the last days. LDS Church leaders often speak of the tremendous groundwork the early Protestant leaders laid, work which often cost these men their lives. I was humbled while writing the biography of my ancestor Benjamin Freeman Bird, who had early American Puritan ancestors. Puritans leaving the Old World believed they were being led by God to create a New World in preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior. The Lord knew His people were prepared for the LDS missionaries. Eight verses in the Doctrine and Covenants speak of this. They are D&C 4:11; 6:3; 11:3; 12:3; 14:3; 31:4; 33:3; 33:7. The passages from sections 6, 11, 12 and 14 are identical, "Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God."

16. The New Testament refers to a missionary shaking the dust from his feet after being rejected. The Doctrine and Covenants describes this action as washing the feet. There are many references in the Book of Mormon to a Priesthood leader having the obligation to preach the gospel in order free himself from the sins of those to whom

he taught the gospel. See in particular Jacob 1:19, “And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.”

17. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 9. It is clear that Joseph has been studying the Book of Mormon, particularly Alma 29.

18. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 10.

19. This letter, referred to earlier, was dated August 14th, 1837.

20. This letter, dated September 7th, 1837, was written by Orson Hyde in Preston to Isaac Russell in Alston. The original letter is preserved in the Special Collections Vault at BYU as part of the Isaac Russell Correspondence, MSS 497.

21. This original letter is preserved in the Isaac Russell Correspondence Collection, MSS 497, at BYU’s Special Collections Vault. The letter is dated December 11th, 1837. Both Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde signed the letter.

22. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 10-11. Concerning the two northern missionaries, Joseph wrote, “On Wednesday last Bro. Snyder returned from Bro. Russell; they had not baptized any when he left.” However, the History of the Church, Volume II, page 508 states that in August “Elder Isaac Russell succeeded in establishing a small branch in Alston, England.” Joseph wrote, “Nothing has been said to them on the Subject of the Gathering, but the Spirit has taught it in a measure to those that have believed. The further we go, the greater the Work appears to gather out the Saints and bring them to Zion, that they may escape those things that shall come on the Earth.”

23. History of the Church, Volume II, page 508.

24. Biography of Isaac Russell by his son George Russell.

25. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 10.

26. This clue came from the Eighth Letter in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, written by Timothy to Ann’s siblings in Toronto earlier that year. “I went to Preston this past Summer and made an exchange with Bro James and found it to be profitable. I preached in the Market Place and in — Park of Preston in the Open Air and had large Congregation. I think there were about fourteen souls Saved while there, and while Brother James was at Bedford good was done, and among the Penitent that find Peace was your Niece Ann Fielding, Glory be to God. James’ Church is flourishing and much good has been done and is doing.” I can only guess that Ann Fielding was John’s fourteen-year-old daughter Sarah Ann. I cannot find another niece who fits.

27. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 10.

28. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 10. I have spent a great deal of time pondering the differences between Joseph Fielding and his brother James. James needed his congregation to provide his personal support. Conversely, Joseph and the other missionaries were looking out for the welfare of their new converts and believed the best thing for them would be to leave England and move to Zion. The image that came to my mind was that the poor would be lifted up, out of the poverty in England, and be moved to a place of opportunity. In Joseph’s mind, that location would be Zion. A doctrine of the Protestants is that the righteous will be lifted up into the clouds to meet the Savior. I have wondered if this lifting up also implies leaving temporal concerns behind as new converts join the LDS Church, make covenants, remain faithful and with the support of fellow members are able to move toward self-sufficiency. The phrase “lifted up” is used several times in the Book of Mormon in this context, including 1 Nephi 13:37; Mosiah 23:22; Alma 13:29; Alma 38:5; 3 Nephi 27:14; Ether 4:19; Moroni 9:25.

29. History of the Church, Volume II, pages 518-527.
30. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 11.
31. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 11.
32. History of the Church, Volume II, page 528.
33. A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain, page 40. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 31. Joseph said John Goodson returned to America with hundreds of copies of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. "We kept as many as we could by any means pay him for; the rest took back. I suppose there was not one in our Company but him that would have done it." Not until January of 1839 did Joseph learn that John had burned them all. As John had been involved in publishing the second edition of the Book of Mormon and was probably financially invested in the sale of the books, it appears he felt he had a right to take them from the other elders.
34. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 12.
35. The Life of John Snider, by Alta Clement Willis, easily found online or in Family Tree. His ID is K2HF-H3M.
36. Two letters preserved in the Isaac Russell Correspondence Collection, MSS 497, suggest financial worries. The first is Isaac's letter to his wife Mary, dated October 23rd, 1837, where Isaac mentioned the "Emberesment my Afares May have sustained by the Wickedness of Jacson and Charlton." The second is a letter written by Orson Hyde and Heber C. Kimball on December 11th, 1837, to Isaac Russell in response to his recent letter from Alston. "But if you wish to go home before that time to see to your Money in Canada, if you can get means to bear your expenses, you can go as soon as you wish."
37. History of the Church, Volume II, page 505.
38. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 25.
39. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 12.
40. This historian was Edward Tullidge who was born in England in 1839 and possibly heard Robert Aitken preach. He joined the LDS Church after hearing the missionaries preach and died in Utah in 1894.
41. The Life of Heber C. Kimball, Whitney, page 159.
42. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, pages 48-49.
43. Mission To England, *Times and Seasons*.
44. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 12-13.
45. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 12.
46. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 26, provided brief information. The 1851 British census shows John Richards living in Preston with his family. This is likely the brother Jennetta was visiting when found by the missionaries in 1837. John is living with his wife and 3 sons, and his occupation is shown as a "General Clerk Attorney."
47. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 27.
48. LDSChurchTemples.com/Preston/, a wonderful website kept by Rick Satterfield. "On August 6, 1837, the Preston Ward was organized, which is the longest continuously functioning unit of the Church in the world."

49. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 12.