

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 11

The Church Progresses in Kirtland

Early in the fall of 1837, Mary Fielding wrote her sister Mercy who was still in Canada with her husband, Robert Thompson. She mentioned that Joseph Smith and Sydney Rigdon had left Kirtland to create new stakes:

Some important things were shown to Brother Joseph in vision previous to his going off relative to the enlargement of our borders which has indeed become indispensably necessary for the inhabitants of Zion both here and in the west are crying the cities are too strait for us give place that we may dwell. The people are crowding in from all parts and as President Rigdon said in his last discourse here they will gather and earth and hell combined cannot hinder them for gather they will. Hence the necessity of planting new stakes which they received a command to do before they left and it is expected that after they have set in order the Church in the west they will fix upon 11 new stakes before they return but this is not spoken of in public for reasons you will be aware of.

Mary told Mercy that fifteen hundred people filled the temple for a Sunday morning service in which President Rigdon delivered a “marvelous” sermon:

It was glorious, far beyond my power to described. The tears flowed plentifully from Brother Joseph’s eyes during the service. When he looked over congregation and considered what had been done and then what was still to be done he seemed to be filled with feelings indescribable. I am truly sorry that I am so unable to give you an idea of what passed. O what feelings ran through my soul while he was pouring his blessings upon all the sincere and faithful saints. How I longed to have a share in them all. Brother Rigdon’s address was upon the enlargement and future glory and purity of Zion when she arises and puts on her beautiful garments which must be before long.

At this point in the letter Mary related “a dream I have had about our own dear Brother Joseph.” She then described the dream:

We were at our old home and some of the Elders of the Church had been to Jerusalem and had found the seamless garment worn by Christ when on Earth. To my surprise I saw Joseph wearing it. I looked at it with great interest and desired much to have it in my hands. At my request he took it off and while examining it I turned the inside outward and observed marks of blood down the back. When I recollected what took place, and turning to Mother, I exclaimed, ‘O Mother, look at this. You know we read that they scourged his back and here are the very marks of his blood left upon his garment.

Mary went on to say: “This dream made considerable impression upon my mind. . . .” She mentioned “it to Bro Joseph [Smith] who gave me this short interpretation. He said it was an evidence that he [Joseph Fielding] wore the Priesthood of the Son of God and that he would have

to endure some of his [Christ's] strength. O may the Lord strengthen & stand by him in every time of need.”

Mary mentioned writing two letters to Mrs. Charleton, their former neighbor in Canada. “It seems to be her lot to suffer,” Mary wrote, encouraging Mercy to write her. Mary concluded the letter with her gratitude in hearing that Mercy’s husband Robert was having such success as a missionary, obviously a reply to a comment Mercy had made in a recent letter to Mary.¹

Joseph Fielding Strives to be a Better Missionary

Late in the month of October, 1837, Joseph Fielding wrote that he had been preaching outside of Preston with Elder Kimball. He recognized that people would rather hear an apostle speak than him, but added:

[The people] were mostly kind. The Lord is blessing me; my Faith increases. My Mind is in some measure enlarged; I am determined to contend for and obtain the Faith once delivered to the Saints. I feel afraid to say [I want the faith] of Alma and Nephi, yet why not?²

In this October entry, Joseph Fielding wrote that he had been ordained an elder by Elder Kimball and Elder Hyde. On that day, which had been set aside for fasting and prayer, they baptized eight. “We also washed our feet against several Priests. . . My dear Brother James was included; this had been long delayed.” The following day, a Sunday, their meetings were well attended, with “an excellent set of singers of the Church and a crowded audience.”³

Joseph Fielding Receives a Letter from Mary Fielding in Kirtland

Two months later, in early December, Joseph wrote that he had received a short letter from his sister Mary in Kirtland. In that letter, Mary related the dream she’d received, about her brother Joseph wearing the garment of Christ, and she included the prophet Joseph Smith’s interpretation.

After quoting from her letter, Joseph wrote, “the same time my Sister had this Dream I was ordained an Elder.” He continued, “This, though it appears somewhat alarming, greatly strengthens my Faith. I feel as though it would be an Honor to Suffer as my Lord and Savior did.”⁴

Mary would have certainly mentioned the recent death of Hyrum Smith’s wife. Jerusha Barden Smith had given birth to her sixth child in early October, and while the infant daughter was doing fine, Jerusha had died within two weeks. If the situation could be more tragic, Hyrum and Joseph were in Far West when Jerusha died, with the Smith family planning her burial without being able to notify Hyrum.

Joseph added that there were daily baptisms in Leyland, his particular area of supervision:

We have now perhaps 200 in Preston, 20 in and about Walker Fold. Brother Russel has written lately he had 20 baptized [in Alston] We have just received Letters from Kirtland. The Work is going pretty well there, and in America in general. . . . I went to see my Brother James and Sister Martha for the Purpose of reading to them a letter from Sister Mary in Kirtland, but my Mind was hurt and darkened. I do not intend to visit them again unless they send for me.⁵

The details of Mary's letter to Joseph have not been preserved, but about this time Mary wrote again to her sister Mercy, still serving with her husband Robert in Canada. Mary said:

I am teaching school which I took for one month, the time expires tomorrow when I expect again to be at liberty, or without employment, but I feel in my mind pretty much at rest on that subject. I have called upon the Lord for direction and truth. He will open my way.

Speaking of the persecution by apostates in Kirtland, Mary wrote:

I do thank my Heavenly Father for the comfort and peace of mind I now enjoy in the midst of all the confusion and perplexity and raging of the devil against the work of God in this place, for although there is a great number of faith, precious souls, yea, the salt of the earth, yet it may be truly called a place where Satan has his seat; he is frequently stirring up some of the people to strife and contention and dissatisfaction with things they do not understand.

Mary's faith was founded on the scriptures. She continued in her letter to Mercy:

I often have, of late, been led to look back on the circumstances of Korah and his company when they rose up against Moses and Aaron. If you read the 16th chapter of Numbers you will there find the feelings and conduct of many of the people, and even the elders of Israel in these days exactly described; whether the Lord will come out today in a similar way or not, I cannot tell. I sometimes think it may be so, but I pray God to have mercy upon us all and preserve us from the power of the great enemy, who knows he has but a short time to work in.

Mary then said:

I feel more and more convinced that it is through suffering that we are to be made perfect, and I have already found it to have the effect of driving me nearer to the Lord and so suffering has become a great blessing to me. I have sometimes of late been so filled with the love of God, and felt such essence of his favor and has made me rejoice abundantly indeed. My heavenly Father has been very gracious unto me both temporally and spiritually.

Mary concluded this touching letter with a validation of her faith shown at the beginning of her

letter:

Since I commenced this letter, a kind sister has proposed my going to stay for a while with her to take charge of two or three children who have been in my school. They propose giving something besides my board, and I think this will suit me better than a public school, if it is but little. I expect to go there in a day or two, and hope to be quite comfortable as I know the family to be on the Lord's side.⁶

The family was that of Fanny Dort, a Smith relative who had recently died in Michigan.⁷

The Church in Canada Continues to Grow

Not long after this, William Law, a new convert in Churchville, outside Toronto, wrote Isaac Russell in Alston and told of the rise of new branches in his area. He gave the status of some of the members Isaac would have known, and then he mentioned that Mercy Thompson had been living with him and his wife while Mercy's husband Robert and Theodore Turley, another new convert, proselyted in the outlying areas. At one point in the letter Brother Law wrote, "Mrs. Thompson. . . is very anxious to hear from her brother who went from you."⁸

Brother Turley, possibly one of Isaac Russell's converts, also wrote Brother Russell, stating, "I have endeavored to labor in [the] vineyard ever since your absence. Bro. Law and myself are truly in the possession of the feelings and spirit of brethren."⁹ Theodore visited Kirtland and carried letters back to the missionaries from Kirtland, including Mary's letter to Mercy.

Ultimately, thirty-eight branches were established in Canada, with about two thousand converts.¹⁰

John Taylor Called to the Apostleship

About this time Joseph Smith notified John Taylor, still overseeing the branches in Canada, that he would fill a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles caused by the excommunication of John F. Boynton.¹¹ Brother Taylor had previously received a personal revelation that this would occur.¹² Initially, the plan was for the Taylors to move to Kirtland, although by 1838 the main body of the Church was in Missouri.

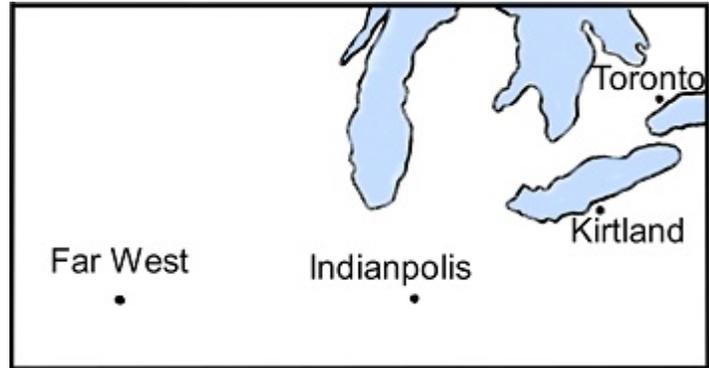
Elder Taylor wrote the thoughts of his heart when he was informed of this calling to the apostleship:

The work seemed great, the duties arduous and responsible. I felt my own weakness and littleness; but I felt determined, the Lord being my helper, to endeavor to magnify it. When I first entered upon Mormonism, I did it with my eyes open. I counted the cost. I looked upon it as a life-long labor, and I considered that I was not only enlisted for time, but for eternity also, and did not wish to shrink now, although I felt my incompetency.¹³

As the days passed, John and Leonora Taylor began making plans to relocate from Toronto to Far

West to join the leaders of the Church there, even though they did not have the financial means to make a journey of over a thousand miles. John wrote that he and Leonora discussed this, with him reassuring her that “the Lord will open out the way.”

Just a few days before their deadline of leaving Canada arrived, they received an offer from recent convert John Mills, who graciously offered to allow the Taylor family to travel with him to Kirtland. John told Brother Mills that his plans had changed, and he was now going to Far West. As a result, Brother Mills changed his plans also, and insisted the Taylor family travel with his family. They stocked a covered sleigh and traveled that winter to Kirtland and then on toward Far West late in the spring, working and preaching along the way.

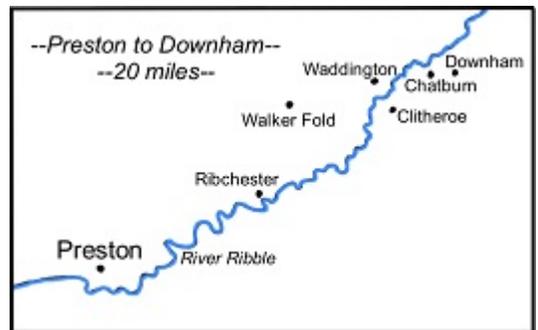


John Taylor, after being called as an apostle, left Toronto in late 1838. Over a period of six months they traveled to Far West, a distance of over a thousand miles. They stopped in Indianapolis where Leonora gave birth to her third child.

The Taylors laid over for a time in Indianapolis where Leonora gave birth to their third child, Joseph James.¹⁴ This delay prevented John Taylor from being present when he was sustained as an apostle in the Far West conference on July 8th.¹⁵

Missionaries Visit the Ribble Valley

The Ribble Valley is a beautiful area in Lancashire about twenty miles inland from the mouth of the River Ribble. Villages in the valley include Chatburn, Downham, Ribchester, Waddington, Clitheroe and Walker Fold.



Towns along the Ribble River were the source of many converts for the LDS missionaries.

Ultimately, these towns would support several branches and would continually be visited by Joseph Fielding during his four-year mission. Late in the fall of 1837, Joseph Fielding and Heber C. Kimball walked northeast along the River Ribble to proselyte.

In late November of 1837, Elder Kimball wrote:

[I] took a tour, to the northeast of Preston in company with Elder Fielding, where we labored together a short time with considerable success, and raised up churches in Ribchester, Thomly, Stoney Gate Lane, and at Clitheroe, a very large market town containing several thousand inhabitants. At the latter place I baptized a Preacher and six members of the Methodist church immediately after I had preached the first time. We

likewise baptized several in the town of Waddington and Downham.

The day after we preached in Downham, we received a very pressing invitation to preach in Chatburn, but having given out an appointment to preach in Clitheroe that evening, I informed them that I would not be able to comply with their request. This did not satisfy them, but they continued to solicit me with the greatest importunity, until I was obliged to consent to go with them, after requesting Elder Fielding to attend to the other appointment.

On my arrival at the village, I was cordially received by the inhabitants, who turned out in large numbers to hear me preach. I commenced my address to them in my usual manner, and the spirit of the Lord seemed to carry the word to the hearts of the congregation, who listened with great attention, and received the ingrafted word, which was able to make them wise unto salvation.

Being satisfied in my mind, from the witness of the spirit, that numbers were believing, I gave an opportunity to those who wished to obey the gospel, after doing so, and immediately repaired to the water, although it was late in the evening . . . I baptized twenty-five for the remission of their sins, and was engaged in this pleasing duty, until one o'clock the next morning. After being absent from Preston about seven days, in which time we added eighty-three souls to the church, we returned, praising God for all his mercies.¹⁶

Joseph Fielding wrote of this time period on November 25th:

Have been from Preston 15 Days and have preached 11 times, sometimes in great weakness, but several times with much liberty. . . many of them believed my testimonyHad an interview with a Priest of the Church of England. . . He complained that we had come into his Parish. I told him I did not read of Parishes in the Scriptures. He made many foolish remarks, one was that Infants could believe, requiring me to prove they could not.



I did not think it worthwhile to answer such questions. I told him my message was to preach Repentance and Baptism to all and to him with the rest, that he must also repent and be baptized, and then left him.¹⁷

The square at the Red Bull Inn in Ribchester, 200 years old when Joseph Fielding saw it, was a site where the first LDS missionaries preached.



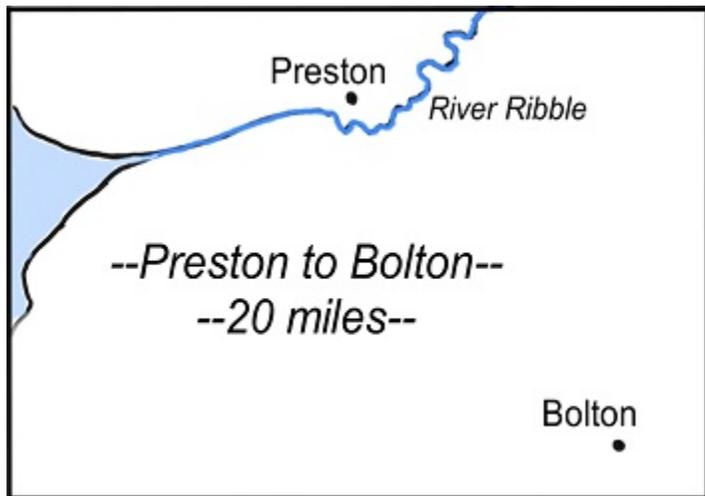
This photo, taken by Keith Foulger in Downham looking to the south, shows Pendle Hill, which Joseph Fielding climbed twice during his mission.



Downham and other towns along the River Ribble were filled with people anxious to hear the Restored Gospel. Photo courtesy of Keith Foulger.



A quaint bridge was built over a small tributary of the Ribble River in this Downham picture taken by Keith Foulger.



Hannah Greenwood was born in Bolton in 1808. She moved to Preston after her mother's death in 1833.

Joseph Fielding Meets Hannah Greenwood

During this period of intense missionary work in the late fall, thirty-year-old Hannah Greenwood happened upon a pamphlet about the LDS Church. Hannah was the youngest child of parents who were both skilled weavers in Bolton, about twenty miles south of Preston.

Her grandfather, Parson Greenwood of Yorkshire, and her father, Thomas, had both preached for the Methodists in addition to weaving and baking, two skills known to have been a part of this family's industry. Hannah's family was very devout and also reasonably well-situated financially.¹⁸

Thomas and Ellen Haslam Greenwood ran a weaving business from the basement of their home before the rise of the Industrial Revolution reduced the profitability of these private operations. Ellen Greenwood was known to have been a good businesswoman and highly skilled at weaving

fine, lightweight cloth, especially barred muslin.

Hannah later took great delight in describing her “beautiful home in England, in which she had lived, with its dark polished, shining window sills” to her daughters.¹⁹ Her parents’ business, which also employed the daughters of neighbors, allowed for the family to live comfortably and provide an education for their children. Hannah was fortunate to be able to write,²⁰ and a biographer would later comment that she loved reading very much.



Hannah Greenwood’s mother Ellen was an expert in weaving barred muslin.

After her father Thomas’s death in 1828, Hannah, by then age 20, worked alongside her mother spinning, dying thread and weaving, skills she would later use on the American frontier. After her mother’s death in 1833, the family home in Bolton was sold and Hannah moved to Preston to live with her brother George, recently widowed. She assisted in caring for his children and became quite attached to them.²¹

Hannah’s mother had taught her precision in her homemaking skills. Hannah must have been a willing and helpful child, because even at a young age she was often sent to assist in the care of ailing relatives.²² George owned a shop where, among other things, he sold bread. Hannah later would demonstrate for her children how to measure dough in a bowl so that all the loaves would be the exact shape and size.

Hannah’s interest in the message which the Elders brought from the United States would have been seen as a break from a family tradition of Methodism. Her grandfather’s personal association with John Wesley was a treasured memory passed to Hannah’s descendants. Her decision to attend a Mormon meeting was surely made with humility and great deliberation.

“Carefully and prayerfully she read all the literature given her by the Elders,” a biographer wrote. “She soon began to understand it and became converted to the Gospel.” In late November, upon entering a room to attend her first LDS Church meeting, she saw Elder Kimball whisper something in Joseph Fielding’s ear, after which they both looked at her and smiled. Although she felt embarrassed by their actions, she remained in the meeting. Later she learned that Elder Kimball had told Joseph, whom she had not yet met, that Hannah was his future wife. The next day, Monday, November 27th, Hannah was officially introduced to Joseph, and “they were at once mutually attracted.”²³

With Methodist circuit preachers in both Hannah’s and Joseph’s heritage, the young couple would have been familiar with the financial sacrifices associated with spreading the gospel and how this might impact a future life together.

Two weeks later Joseph Fielding wrote in his journal that he had heard Elder Hyde preach on the

topic of the Priesthood, “with extraordinary Power.” He continued, “I think I never heard anything to equal it. He was filled with the Spirit, as I never before saw any man; thus the Lord is with us.”

Isaac Russell Determines to Leave England

On December 11th, Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde wrote a letter to Isaac Russell in Alston in response to a letter from him where he asked permission to leave the mission field and return to America.

Isaac had received a letter from his wife Mary concerning his property in Canada. John Taylor and Robert Blashel Thompson had been unable to secure a second mortgage on the Russell’s property and Mary wished Isaac to return to America.²⁴ The apostles informed Isaac that they would be returning to America about the first of April, and he would be welcome to travel with them at that time, but if he could raise the funds for travel he could return on his own. It is apparent from Elder Kimball’s response that Isaac had felt it his duty to preach against the priests, and as a result he was the object of their persecution. The two apostles took this second opportunity to warn Isaac to leave the priests in Cumberland alone. They wrote:

Bro. Kimball has just returned from a 3 weeks & 3 days tour and he has baptized 41 persons and he says that he has not said one word about the priests. Many are being baptized in Preston almost daily. We say to you Bro. Russell, there are other places besides ____ and Alston where there are Saints, and if they will not receive you in one place, go to another; and so keep doing till you find a field of labour, and then be careful and not close it up by bearing down on the priests and Sects.

They concluded their letter with these words:

But if you stay and labour, let the priests alone. We do know by the word of the Lord that that course is wrong: And our daily experience teaches us so likewise. Our way is not hedged up. We can go almost any where and preach and baptize and our way is not closed up because we let the priests alone. And if you would do the same your way would not be closed up. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Concerning putting the Church in order, you have the covenants and articles, proceed according to them and according to the best light you can get upon them by the Spirit of the Lord and you will do right.

We want you to feel some responsibility as well as ourselves and we want you to know something of the mind of the Lord by his Spirit –

We are yours in the Bonds of the new covenant.

Orson Hyde
H. C. Kimball²⁵

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 and our way is not closed up. because we let the
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We are yours in the Bonds of the new covenant.
 Orson Hyde.
 H. C. Kimball.

This letter, dated December 11th, 1837, was written by Orson Hyde and Heber C. Kimball to Isaac Russell in Alston. They admonished him to leave the priests of other churches alone.

John Fielding's Letter to Joseph Fielding

Just before the end of the year, Joseph's oldest brother John wrote a scathing four-page letter concerning Joseph's preaching to James's congregation that summer. This letter was in response to a letter Joseph had written him.²⁶ In that letter,²⁷ John compared his brother Joseph to Satan who transformed "himself into an Angel of Light that he may lye in wait to ensnare and deceive unstable and unwary souls."

John complained that Joseph had not visited him and their brother Thomas, although he had been in England five months. Most certainly Joseph had been too busy with his missionary work to travel the two hundred miles to Graveley, although as John references Joseph's letter, it is apparent that Joseph had wanted to be in touch with these two brothers.

John referred to multiple letters from America after Joseph's conversion. He took the opportunity in this December 19th letter to refute Joseph's beliefs:

I have no doubt at all but that the Gospel Dispensation was properly and fully introduced and established by Christ and that that was the last dispensation – the Last Revelation that ever would or ever will be made to Man

John continued:

You and I have long been witnesses that the Gospel as we were taught to understand it when 20 years younger than we are now is the Power of God unto *full* Salvation unto every one that believeth. And I verily believe St. Paul was quite sincere when he said ‘If an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel than that we preach, let him be accursed’ etc. And also our blessed Lord Jesus in his last Revelation, as recorded at the very end of the New Testament ‘If any Man shall add’ etc.

John’s eloquent letter demonstrates his familiarity with the scriptures. Although a farmer and not a minister, his love of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his devotion to Methodist beliefs reflects the instruction all the Fielding children would have received in their childhood home. His penmanship is excellent, as is that of his brother James. It is apparent from John Fielding’s letter that Protestant opposition to any new revelation stems from these two New Testament verses which are frequently cited even today. The fact that John used them so soon after Joseph’s arrival in England indicates his fluent knowledge of the scriptures.

In addition, John was also able to call upon other sources besides the scriptures, just as members of the LDS Church today might use a quote from General Conference to support a position. John wrote:

I am fully persuaded that the doctrines and the whole constitution of Christianity as taught and enforced by those venerable and eminent servants of God, Wesley, Fletcher, Dr. A. Clarke, Tyndale, Watson, etc, etc, etc. whose labours were so much blessed to the World; and which have been experienced and exemplified by hundreds of thousands since the commencement of Methodism so called, are the very Quintessence and Inception of that very Gospel preached by the ‘Apostles of the Gentiles.’²⁸

John then defended their brother James with very strong words:

How or why you should be surprised or disappointed that our dear Brother James, myself, or any others should set ourselves against a newly invented or newly conceived by hypothesis in direct opposition to the doctrines etc to which I have alluded – and condemning all those dignified Worthies to which I have referred including our beloved Parents as deluded fanatics or vile impostors, I for one cannot imagine

John was either unaware of the exchange of letters between Joseph and James in 1835, or he did not connect the relevance of those letters with the issue at hand, the latter being most likely. He continued:

And now, as I like candour, and especially so in matters of importance, I must tell you, that nothing *in my mind* is more prejudicial against you and your profession Than your going and interrupting, and sowing the seeds of confusion and discord among James’s Peaceable prospering Society, and that too, after the most positive assurance given to him

on being permitted by him to make use of his pulpit, that no new doctrine etc should be introduced or mentioned – This James declared to me was the case, and monstrous does it appear to me!!

Since James's own words in his 1835 letter show that he was waiting for apostles and prophets, Joseph would have been on solid ground to defend himself against the charge that he preached new doctrine unfamiliar to James or his congregation. The inflammatory doctrine, we are learning, was baptism for the remission of sins which brought membership into a new church.

Perhaps John had been asked for financial support as James's congregation dwindled. John continued:

I would earnestly entreat you if you would establish your own cause, as you have a legal right to do, not to do it upon other men's foundation, even St. Paul would not do that, but as a fair and honest way, as others do, out of the world, no exclaiming against or persecuting others who may differ from you, and who are quite as confident that they are right as you can be, and who would *then* feel quite satisfied that you should think for yourself etc.

In all fairness, with the distance of over 175 years in time, and the ease of having these letters open side by side on a computer screen, it is relatively easy to highlight and compare the words of Joseph's brothers. Nonetheless, it is glaring to read James's words at the beginning of his 1835 letter to Joseph and his associates in Toronto:

If your brethren will sell you into Egypt simply because in love you declare the truth, the act is theirs & not yours and then 'blessed are ye when *Men* separate *you* from *their* company.'

James censured the Methodist leaders in Toronto who condemned Joseph Fielding, John Taylor and other members of their study group for declaring what they believed to be the truth. Two years later he and John chose the same action against their own brother.

John had full knowledge that Mary and Mercy lived in Kirtland as members of the LDS Church. He wrote:

I confess and do assure you my dear Brother Joseph, my views are such, and my love to you and my dear Sisters in the New-World is such as to cause me most deeply to deplore your misfortunes, to say the best I can of it, in being so much deceived yourselves, and in being rendered so capable of deceiving others, and to pray that God in his infinite Mercy may give you fully to know his Will in these Matters; and that he may keep us and the rest of our dear family steadfast and unmoveable in the truth faith

Toward the end of his lengthy letter, he validated his opinions by mentioning that he had shown his letter to their brother Thomas, who lived nearby. "[H]e is perfectly of my opinion as to its

contents. . . .” A week later, on the right side of the back page which served as the envelope, John added that he had visited their sister Ann in Bedford to talk with her and her minister-husband Timothy Matthews, “respecting your views etc. to show them your letter to me and this written by me in answer to yours.”

John continued, “I had not been long there before I asked them what they thought etc. of the American teachers, i.e. yourself etc. They replied understatingly “They are under as awful delusion; & of this we have demonstrable evidence.””

He continued on the left side of the page with a reference to Mormon elders preaching to their brother-in-law’s congregation in Bedford. With great finality, he ended his letter by saying “I am now fully satisfied that I am doing my duty in sending you this”

After receiving the letter, Joseph made only a simple note of it:

I have received a Letter from my oldest Brother; he is very severe. . . I am become a stranger unto my Brethren and an Alien to my Mother’s Children.²⁹

Years later in cataloging Fielding papers, an unknown descendant of Joseph Fielding identified this particular letter as “Lamentations of John Fielding.”

Joseph Fielding Acknowledges Opposition

Joseph wrote of the opposition they faced in Preston and mentioned a recent meeting:

[Where] many of the Priests attended. Elder Hyde again defended the truth successfully. It is a strange fact that the Letters we sent from Canada were brought forward as Weapons against us. My brother James had formerly highly recommended to his People, i.e., when he received them, though he kept from them that Part that treated of Baptism. He has now given them into the Hand of an Enemy to us, who has selected from them such parts as he could make to serve his turn, as he supposed. We see Preachers of almost all denominations. . . uniting together to oppose the Work of God. . . .I heard that my brother James was at the meeting; felt truly glad that I was not there. He is evidently in Darkness, but knows it not.³⁰

Christmas Day 1837

Joseph wrote in his diary on Christmas morning, 1837. He and Elder Kimball had returned from another two week mission into the country. “The Lord has been with me, giving me more Power than I ever had before. I have preached as many times as there have been Days.”

Elder Kimball wrote, “We added about eighty-three souls to the church. . . . It being near Christmas, we agreed to hold a general conference in Preston on Christmas Day [a Monday], there being business of importance of the Churches to be attended to, and likewise several to be

ordained to the ministry.” Three hundred attended this meeting, held in the Temperance Hall, “all of whom with the exception of three had been baptized within a very short time. Elders Hyde, Fielding and myself [the three] were present.”³¹

Joseph Fielding wrote of this meeting:

On the 25th, Christmas day, had a good Day. Six were baptized in the Morning. The Church met together at ten, with their Children. The Meeting was opened by Prayer, etc., then as the Children were many, several Scores, I believe, we attended to the blessing of them. As the Place we met in is round, and the bottom bare Earth, it reminded us of the Account of Christ blessing the Children.³²

Joseph named seven men who were ordained to the office of teacher. Included among them was Amos Fielding, of no relation to Joseph, but who remained faithful in the Church and ultimately held many positions of responsibility, including later serving with Joseph on the Council of Fifty in Nauvoo.

Joseph then named Peter Melling and George Watts who were among seven men ordained priests and who had previously held the office of teacher. He then named four who were ordained to the office of priest who had not previously been ordained. All will recognize the name of William Clayton. He had been baptized in October of 1837 and would later write the beloved hymn, “Come, Come, Ye Saints.” Another name in this category belonged to William Greenhalgh.

William Greenhalgh, at this time age thirty-six, had joined the LDS Church with his wife, Mary Ann Peake, who was thirty-one. They were the parents of three sons, having recently lost a young daughter. William’s two brothers, Robert and Nehemiah, had also joined the Church by this time with their wives, Elizabeth and Margaret, respectively. Of this extended family, certainly brimming with excitement about their new-found faith, Mary Ann would be the only one who would find her way to Nauvoo and ultimately to Salt Lake City.³³

Joseph Smith would later write of this meeting in Preston, which was considered historic, saying that over three hundred were present, and that, “This was the first public conference of the Church in England, and at this conference the Word of Wisdom was first publicly taught in that country.” More than a dozen branches of the Church had been established at this time.³⁴

Conversely, “Apostasy, persecution, confusion and mobocracy strove hard to bear rule at Kirtland,” to the point that Apostle Brigham Young was forced from Kirtland.³⁵ Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was excommunicated.

Chapter 11 Endnotes Pages 164-177:

1.7 October 1837 Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson, MSS 2779. The mention of the seamless robe comes from the passage in John 19: 23-24. Protestants were often adherents to the belief that many relics of Christ had been discovered and preserved, including this particular robe. Mary’s reference to Robert B. Thompson’s

missionary work is quoted fully here, “I am truly thankful to hear of Brother T’s pleasure & success in his labours & trust he will experience more and more of the aid of the holy Spirit in all his undertakings.”

2. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 13.

3. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 13.

4. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 14-15.

5. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 13.

6. The letter does not appear to have been dated, but was likely written in early September of 1837. A partial transcription is found in *Daughter of Britain*, Corbett, pages 35-37. Brother Corbett determined that this family Mary worked with had a cousin-relationship with the Smith family and just a short time later would be a factor in Joseph Smith knowing Mary Fielding well enough to recommend that Hyrum marry her after Jerusha’s death. A digital copy of the letter is available on the Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson Letters Collection, MSS 2779. It appears that Mary had many encounters with Joseph Smith.

7. *Mothers of the Prophets*, page 96. The author reported that Fanny’s father was an uncle to Joseph and Hyrum Smith, making these two brothers Fanny’s cousins. I could not find Fanny in the Smith family tree. Perhaps the relationship was more distant than first cousin.

8. This letter was dated November 10th, 1837, and was written by William Law in Churchville to Isaac Russell in Alston. A transcription of this letter is part of the Isaac Russell Correspondence held at BYU’s Special Collections, MSS 497.

9. In a letter to Isaac Russell from Theodore Turley dated November 9th, 1837, Theodore reminded Isaac of a prophecy he made concerning Theodore’s Canadian property, that it would sell on the “last day.” He then stated, “I have sold. The Lord has shown His delivering my hand in my behalf to a great extent in preparing my way for the ministry. I have endeavored to labor in [the] vineyard ever since your absence.” This transcribed letter is part of the Isaac Russell Correspondence Collection held at BYU’s Special Collections, MSS 497.

10. *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise*, Glen M. Leonard, Deseret Book: 2002, page 89.

11. *Life of John Taylor*, page 47. A footnote on this page reads, “There is a revelation in the Doctrine & Covenants, Sec 188, that was given at Far West, on the 8th of July, 1838, in which John Taylor, John E. Page, Wilford Woodruff and Willard Richards, are called to the Apostleship; and direction is given that they should be officially notified of their appointment. But it is quite evident that Elder Taylor was notified of his appointment previous to July 8th, 1838, as he wound up his affairs and prepared to leave Canada, because of his being informed of this call to the Apostleship in the fall of 1837.”

12. *Journal History*, 13 December 1858, image 357. During a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve, “Elder John Taylor said it was revealed to him, he would be one of the Twelve.”

13. *Life of John Taylor*, page 48.

14. Joseph James Taylor was born June 8th, 1838, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

15. *History of the Church*, Volume III, page 47. John Taylor was not listed in the minutes with the other apostles who were present.

16. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, pages 28-29. The word “ingrafted” is very old, and means the basis or groundwork, such as a moral foundation.

17. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 14. A 1979 Ensign article contains pictures of this area, including the picture I have used of the White Bull Inn. It can be found online here:
<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/12/the-way-it-looks-today-a-camera-tour-of-church-history-sites-in-great-britain?lang=eng>

18. The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City has several biographies of Hannah, some of which share the same information about her. Not all of these biographies have authors who are identified, but of the ones who are, all are descendants of Hannah. One biography, author not known, stated that “Parson Greenwood was a bosom friend of John Wesley, and her father, Thomas Greenwood, and one of her brothers were also Methodist preachers. The Greenwood family were naturally very religious and serious minded, and were in comfortable circumstances financially.” I have referred to the book Kirkgate Chapel, Bradford and Its Associations with Methodism several times. Knowing that John Wesley preached in Preston, and that Parson Greenwood lived in Leeds near Preston, is consistent with the family legend that these two men knew each other.

19. Details about Hannah’s life have come from a biography written by Josephine Burton Bagley in 1977. And as just mentioned I used a variety of short biographies kept by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers which also contain details of Hannah’s young life.

20. Several letters have been preserved which were written by Hannah. One is dated March 27, 1840 and is part of the Joseph Fielding Correspondence at the LDS Church History Library. Another letter, dated May 23, 1841. A photocopy is part of the Joseph Fielding Correspondence Collection, MSS 670, at BYU’s Special Collections. Hannah’s writing is clear, practiced and legible. In comparison, Ann Fielding Matthews often had her husband write her letters for her, and one of Martha Ibbotson Fielding’s letters was nearly illegible, although that can be partly be blamed on the ink she used and the tight sentences to fit as much as she could onto the page.

21. Josephine Burton Bagley related an interesting story, that when Hannah’s nephew George Greenwood wanted to buy a farm about 1855, Hannah traveled with him to Kaysville to meet with some of her friends who were selling a piece of property. This is how Hannah’s daughter Rachel first met William Walton Burton.

22. Biography of Hannah Greenwood Fielding from the DUP. “When she became old enough, she was frequently called upon to assist in nursing members of the family during illness.”

23. A DUP biography by Louise Burton Crossley mentioned the circumstances of Hannah first learning of the missionaries. A biography which was later published in “Women of Faith and Fortitude,” a DUP publication, gave Hannah’s baptism date of March 15, 1838, and mentioned that Elder Kimball had baptized her. An unnamed author told the story of Elder Kimball whispering to Joseph when Hannah entered the room. Several biographies applied Heber’s quip to Willard Richards (“I baptized your wife today”), to the situation with Joseph. Although Heber baptized Hannah, I could not verify that he used this line again with Joseph. Several histories mentioned that Joseph was the only bachelor among the missionaries, which was not the case. On page 21 of the Joseph Fielding Diary transcript, he wrote that he was first introduced to Hannah on November 27, 1837.

24. The letter from Mary Russell to Isaac Russell was dated 17 July 1837 and a transcription is held at BYU’s Special Collections, MSS 497. I have referred to her letter several times.

25. The letter from Heber C. Kimball to Isaac Russell is dated December 11th, 1837 and is part of the Isaac Russell Correspondence Collection housed in the Special Collections Vault at BYU, MSS 497.

26. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 46. Under the date of 21 November 1839 Joseph wrote, “I wrote to him [John] once since I came to England, and he sent me a severe letter, inviting me to his house on Condition that I would

renounce my Faith.”

27. This letter, written by John Fielding to Joseph Fielding from Gravely on December 19th, 1837, is preserved in the LDS Church History Library as part of the Joseph Fielding Correspondence, MS 7617 Folder 1, first letter. John mentioned “inconsistency of conduct in your brethren at Bedford etc. etc.,” but did not elaborate. The letter began with “My dear Brother,” and concluded with, “I therefore must conclude, and believe me as ever your very affectionate Brother, John Fielding.”

28. In the April LDS Conference of 2010, Elder D. Todd Christofferson would have agreed in part with John Fielding. At that time he said, “William Tyndale was not the first, not the last, of those who in many countries and languages have sacrificed, even to the point of death, to bring the word of God out of obscurity. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude.”

29. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 16.

30. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 15.

31. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 15; Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 29.

32. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 15-16.

33. My study of William Greenhalgh’s family has been as thorough as I could make it. Before her marriage to Joseph Fielding, Mary Ann Peake Greenhalgh was known in Nauvoo as Mary Ann Greenhalgh. I found the 1840 ship she emigrated on, and as a result found her husband, his brothers, and their children on this record. I searched the patriarchal blessing index and found Mary Ann, William and Nehemiah’s patriarchal blessing information, resulting in their birth dates, although Mary Ann’s was already known. I searched long and hard for christening records for the Greenhalgh brothers but could not find them. I have assumed they are brothers, but perhaps they were cousins. Mary Ann had a niece who is married to a Greenhalgh, but I could not find a connection there. I found the three Greenhalgh brothers in Kirtland in 1840, but Mary Ann, although named in other records, was not on the 1840 Kirtland census. However, Kirtland Township (Ohio) Records, film #877763, names Mary Ann Greenhalgh, with the maiden name of Peak, having arrived in Kirtland in 1840. All this information points to a very brief stop for her in Kirtland. It is possible that Mary Ann arrived in Nauvoo before Joseph Fielding did, although I don’t believe that is the case. I found the proof that this Mary Ann Peake Greenhalgh was the same woman who married Joseph Fielding in Nauvoo in Logan Temple records from 1919, when Mary Ann’s daughter Josephine made certain that her half-brothers’ temple work was completed. She named herself as the half-sister to these men, leaving no doubt about this relationship. Previous to my research, the family had believed Mary Ann was a widow, with nothing known about William. My exhaustive research into William Greenhalgh’s life did not initially include reading Joseph Fielding’s Diary, because I knew that would happen as I wrote this biography. As a result I was quite pleased to find this reference.

34. History of the Church, Volume II, pages 528-9. “Branches were established in Eccleston, Wrightington, Heskin, Euxton Bath, Daubers Lane, Chorley, Whittle, Leyland Moss, Ribchester, Thornley, Clithero, Waddington, Downham, and other places round about Preston. . . .”

35. History of the Church, Volume II, page 529.