

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 15

1840: John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff Arrive in Liverpool

John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Theodore Turley spent most of the month of December on a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean. On Saturday, January 11th, 1840, they arrived in Liverpool. They spent the first night at a small hotel. Early the next day, they retrieved their luggage after clearing their chests through customs. John's first task was to locate his brother-in-law, George Cannon.

The three men found George at his cabinet shop not far from the docks. John Taylor was invited to stay at George's home after his long voyage. Wilford and Theodore left a provision chest and a bedding box with Mr. Cannon,¹ but they then returned to the city. Each stored a valise which held their clothing at a small hotel on Church Street, not far from the docks, and then they toured the city, seeing "several Noted places, the New Market, custom house, Lord Nelson's monument. . . all of which is quite splendid."² That night, after retrieving their small cases, they traveled by train to Preston, leaving Elder Taylor in Liverpool.³

George Cannon Family Hears the Restored Gospel



The Cannon home was less than a mile from Hope Street where Robert Aitken's chapel once stood.

George Cannon was forty-five years old. His wife Ann Quayle, who had also been born in Peel, was two years younger, the same age as George's sister Leonora, John Taylor's wife.

The Cannon family lived at 43 Norfolk Street, just a short distance from the Liverpool docks.⁴

Ann and George at that time had five living children. George, the oldest, had just turned thirteen. The youngest daughter and last of eight children would be born seven months later and named Leonora, after John Taylor's wife. As an adult, George would adopt his mother's surname as his second name.⁵



St. Peter's Cathedral stood along Church Street, not far from the Liverpool docks.

Ann Quayle Cannon was known from the writings of her children as a very spiritual woman, and her son David later spoke of her, saying that she belonged to the Church of England.⁶ When Ann saw George and John Taylor coming from the docks, she turned to her son George and said, "George, there goes a man of God. He is come to bring salvation to your father's house."⁷

This visit by an apostle to the home of George Cannon was an historic event. Obviously, it was the first meeting of this couple and George's brother-in-law John Taylor. However, this initial meeting would lead to teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Cannon home. Unthought of

by any at this time was that young George and his siblings would become well-known in 19th and 20th century Utah, with George being known throughout the United States and Europe. These siblings would parent an extremely large posterity which has included several apostles, uncountable local Church leaders, thousands of missionaries, and even today includes the heritage of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, currently a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, whose great-great-grandmother was the unborn Leonora.

Together, these six Cannon siblings would have one-hundred and thirty-three children. Many of their grandchildren are still alive today.⁸ Young George would, in less than two decades, serve closely with John Taylor in the leading councils of the Church and would ultimately serve as a counselor to his uncle as John Taylor served as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

During his brief visit, John taught the family the truths of the restored Gospel. He also sang for them the hymns of Zion and testified that Joseph Smith was a prophet called of God. Ann was converted immediately. Young George “drank it all in.” John gave Father Cannon a Book of Mormon and promised that if he would read it with a sincere heart, he would know the truthfulness of it.⁹

After spending the weekend in Liverpool, Elder Taylor left by train for Preston, where he arrived on Monday, January 13th.

Arriving Apostles Meet with the British Mission Presidency in January, 1840

Joseph Fielding, the British mission president, was unaware that the apostles had arrived. He and Hiram Clark had left Preston on the 4th of January and that day had walked twenty miles to Bolton. Joseph wrote, “Had not Faith enough to avoide being tired.”¹⁰ They solved some disputes among the members, and Joseph had high praise for Amos Fielding, the elder in charge of the Bolton Branch.

Joseph and Hiram continued on their journey, working with branch leaders and members in Stockport. Certainly they were thrilled to receive word that they were to meet Elders Woodruff and Taylor in Preston, which they did on Thursday the 16th. “Met the next Day,” Joseph wrote, “We rejoiced together.”



Unaware two apostles had again arrived on British shores, Joseph Fielding left Preston and walked 20 miles to Bolton, then on to Stockport, handling issues in the branches.

Six men gathered at the home of Willard and Jennetta Richards in Preston that Friday. Joseph Fielding presided at the meeting, and Theodore Turley was selected as scribe. Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, Hiram Clark and of course Willard Richards were present. They deliberated on the best locations where the missionaries should serve, concluding that Wilford Woodruff and Theodore Turley would go to the Staffordshire potteries. Hiram Clark and William Clayton would serve in Manchester. Elder Richards would serve where the Spirit directed. All agreed

that they would communicate via letter with the presidency at least once a month. Elder Richards determined to stay in touch with the two missionaries in Scotland. They discussed holding a conference but chose to wait until more of the apostles arrived.¹¹ This would have been a momentous council meeting with these six faithful brethren, four of whom were newly arrived after enduring extreme trials in America.

Joseph Fielding and John Taylor are Assigned to Proselyte in Liverpool

Willard Richards, an American, had been serving in England with Joseph Fielding for eighteen months. These men would have discussed the strength of the branches in England, and then would have listened as the Spirit directed them.

John Taylor, having met his wife's brother and feeling good about the possibilities in Liverpool, surely had hoped to initially serve there, and that was agreed upon, with Joseph Fielding to travel with him.¹²

Joseph sent a letter to William Clayton in Manchester, asking him to meet Elder Woodruff, Hiram Clark and Theodore Turley at the train station on Saturday. Joseph "saw them start on the railroad," knowing they would be met at the other end. Steam-driven trains had been departing from the Preston station for about a year. The missionaries would have traveled twenty miles to Bolton, and then would have had to change trains to travel the last twelve miles to Manchester. This would have been a new and certainly thrilling experience for each of them.¹³



In January 1840, it was decided that Joseph Fielding and John Taylor would serve in Liverpool. Wilford Woodruff went to the Potteries. Two earlier American elders were already in Scotland. The branch in Alston was serving with local leadership.

The following Sunday, January 19th, Sunday, Elder Clayton accompanied Elder Woodruff and the other missionaries to church. Willard wrote:

I met with the Saints in the morning . . . At noon it was with difficulty that we could get out of the house for the press of the Saints wishing to strike hands with us. . . . I also met a large congregation at the same place in the Evening & preached the gospel unto them. I had the spirit of God & they gave good attention. . . .¹⁴

Losing no time, Joseph and John Taylor met with the priesthood leaders in Preston that Saturday night. "A good number present and a good feeling prevailed." Elder Taylor spoke, encouraging the Brethren." On Sunday morning they preached in the street in front of Brother David Burrow's home. Members from nearby Longton asked Elder Taylor to return with them, "and it was agreed that he & myself should be there on Wednesday Eve, as we should pass to Liverpool."¹⁵

On Monday, January 20th, Willard Richards accompanied Joseph and Elder Taylor to Penwortham. Joseph wrote, “Many came from Longton, Whittle, etc. to hear Bro. Taylor, who preached to them in the Eve. & set forth the Gospel in its plainness and Simplicity.”

John Moon had traveled seven miles from Eccleston, but the roads were so poor from heavy rain that they could not return with him to visit his family, many of whom were quite ill.¹⁶

On Wednesday Joseph and Elder Taylor “Left Preston to go to Liverpool; stopped at Longton that Night.” The missionaries held a meeting at William Blackhurst’s home. Brother Blackhurst was a faithful member who would soon emigrate to the United States and later march with the Mormon Battalion.



Joseph Fielding and John Taylor preached in the streets in Longton and visited other cities as they made their way to Liverpool in January, 1840.

That evening Brother Blackhurst’s home was “full of attentive hearers, some Persecutors,” who listened to Elder Taylor preach. Afterward, with just the Blackhurst family in attendance, Elder Taylor prophesied, and Joseph Fielding wrote that the prophecy was “a Blessing for me.” He wrote:

Bro. Fielding, thou hast been faithful in thy Office & the Lord has seen thy Diligence and hath blessed thee, & he will bless thee more and more. He shall pour his Spirit upon Thee in a manner that thou has not thought of, nor has it entered into thy Heart. Thou shalt lift up thy voice to Multitudes in the East & in the West, in the North & in the South, and thou shalt bring many to Zion – and much more in the same strain, which caused me to rejoice even unto Tears & I feel to praise the Name of the Lord.¹⁷

Thursday morning the two missionaries walked thirteen miles to Ormskirk, attempting to preach along the way, but they were unable to find a suitable location.

Joseph Fielding Meets George and Ann Quayle Cannon

For a short distance they traveled in a “gig,” a small, one-horse carriage. They then “paid 1schilling 6 pence each” to travel by coach to Liverpool. That night, Joseph slept at a tavern, but John Taylor returned to the home of George Cannon.¹⁸ By this time George had read the Book of Mormon.

This particular book was most likely one of the second editions published in Kirtland in 1837 and would have been brought by Elder Taylor to England, as there had not been a British printing of the Book of Mormon at this early date. “He read it far into the night, at meal times, and even had it propped open on his joiner’s bench where he could glimpse a few sentences as he worked.” George Cannon told John Taylor, “A bad man could not have written it and a good man would be afraid to. It is from God.”¹⁹

While visiting the Cannon home, Joseph wrote Hannah and told her of the blessing John Taylor

had given him. He said, "I saw it come by the Spirit of God and it made me to rejoice, almost to weeping."²⁰

Joseph wrote that Brother and Sister Cannon "are kind to us." Joseph visited an aunt and uncle of Hannah's who felt Hannah should emigrate to America. Joseph told Hannah he intended to visit them again and share the gospel with them.

Joseph Fielding and John Taylor Preach to Timothy Matthews' Congregants in Liverpool

Elder Taylor's biographer described Joseph's brother-in-law, the Reverend Timothy Matthews, and wrote that "he raised up a number of congregations, one of which was located in Liverpool." Elder Taylor and Joseph Fielding "diligently searched these people out and presented the gospel message to them."²¹

Joseph wrote about that weekend in Liverpool:

As we had no Appointment, we went to Mr. Aitkin's Chapel. Here were some honest souls who had been baptized by Mr. Matthews, in the sincerity of their heart. I felt to love them & to sing with them as Saints. . . .²²

Both John Taylor and Joseph Fielding wrote that Timothy Matthews was not in Liverpool that Sunday, but the young man who preached to his congregation "lamented the state of the church, its pride, its vanity, its lack of spiritual power." This man "prayed for the blessings of the Holy Ghost to be again made manifest, and for the coming of Christ's kingdom."²³

After the meeting, Elder Taylor asked to speak. Joseph wrote:

16 of the leading Men took us into the Vestry and enquired who we were, etc. Bro T. told them he wished to have an opportunity to speak to them, but he should like an Hour or 2, but this they could not consent to.

Elder Taylor then said:

I have listened with deep interest to the things that I have heard this morning. . . . I have been pleased with the correct views you entertain in regard to the situation of the world. We believe in those things as you do. We hear that you believe in baptism and the laying on of hands, so also do we. Brethren and friends, we are the humble followers of Jesus Christ and are from America. I lately arrived in this place, and have come five thousand miles without purse or scrip, and I testify to you, my brethren, that the Lord has revealed Himself from heaven and put us in possession of these things you are so anxiously looking for and praying that you may receive.²⁴

Joseph Fielding wrote:

One of them said their Pastor, Mr. Matthews, said he had examined their Books, etc., and was satisfied that it was of the Devil, though before they learned who we were while Bro.

T. was speaking of what the Lord had done in restoring the ancient Blessings, several exclaimed ‘Glory be to God.’ One asked, ‘Have you the Gifts in your Church?’ We both said ‘Yes.’ . . . They thought it not right to let us into the Chapel till their Pastor returned. . . so we parted. . . .

In the Evening we went again to Mr. Aitkin’s Meeting; sat in the same Place as in the Morn. . . . At the end of the Meeting. . . one of the Leaders came to us and invited us home to his House. At this, his Friends looked troubled, but we went with him. His Name is Mitchel. We soon entered into Conversation; we saw him to be an honest Man. We talked with him & his Wife till Midnight; slept there. He was well satisfied; this was just what we hoped for, that the Lord would open the heart of one or 2 to converse with us. . . he agreed that we should come to preach in his House on Tuesday Eve. . . .

Tuesday Eve we went according to [our] appointment to preach, but found that Mitchel had been before his brethren to answer to taking us to his House. They scolded and persuaded till he promised to stop us from preaching in his House. His wife had to go & give back word to their Members, who were sadly grieved and to show their love, sent us 2 Shillings. However, the Man had the Liberty of conversing with us & 10 or 12 in all got together, so Bro. T. talked a good while & I a little. . . the People were highly pleased.

They agreed to listen to the missionaries preach on Sunday evening, and “Mitchel was so delighted that he could not sleep in the Night; was fully determined to be one of us.”²⁵

On Wednesday, the 29th, Joseph and Elder Taylor received a letter from William Clayton in Manchester. He reported that he and Hiram Clark were getting along well and had baptized some in Manchester and confirmed others in Peover.

Wilford Woodruff has Success in the Potteries

Joseph Fielding then wrote, “Bro. C. has also got a Letter from Elder Woodruff in Burslem; he is much pleased with his interview with the Saints there; 66 baptized.”²⁶

On Sunday morning Elder Taylor and Joseph attended a service where of which Joseph said:

A young man preached on ‘Go ye into all the World & preach the gospel to every Creature.’ We thought he should have gone on, to show what the Gospel was, but he only said it was good tidings – a dry discourse.

That evening he and Elder Taylor preached to two or three hundred people, according to the arrangements Mr. Mitchell had made. This was “the 1st Public Preaching in Liverpool, a good feeling under the Word.” Afterward Mr. Mitchell and several others requested baptism. “We felt satisfied as we returned to our Lodging, that the Lord had led us in the right way. Many were convinced of the Truth; we felt thankful.”²⁷

Joseph mentioned in his diary that he spent quite a bit of time writing letters. Through this means he was able to stay in close contact with the missionaries throughout England in addition to

proselyting. By this time he had been invited to stay with the Cannon family and wrote in passing, "Mr. & Mrs. Cannon with whom we lodge are very kind."²⁸

Liverpool Converts are Baptized in the Irish Sea

The next day, February 4th, Joseph wrote:

Tuesday. Dined at Lovetts. We then went to Mitchel's and from thence took 10 to the Waters of Baptism. Their brethren had been trying hard to prevent them. . . We went to the Seashore where they had been not long before baptised by Mr. Matthews. They said the People would think it strange that they should be baptised again; it was a Cross to them, but on the Way to the Water Mitchel said to me that Mr. Aitken told him he would have to be baptised again. It is plain that Aitken and Matthews are aware of their being without Authority; hence I suppose they will be without Excuse.

After we returned from the Water they were in good Spirits & we left them rejoicing. Some of them said they felt we were Men of God as we taught in the Meeting the first time they saw us. One Woman said she was unwell when she came to see us at Mitchel's on Friday; she was sure we were Men of God & thought if she could touch us she would be better, and as she bid us good-night she shook hands with us & was instantly better & had been ever since.²⁹

On Saturday, Joseph wrote that he and Elder Taylor discussed their living situation and felt that they must pay the Cannon's for their lodging. While sitting in an upstairs room, "Mr. Cannon came up & presented Bro. T. a Sovereign. Bro. T. objected taking it, but was compelled to take it, to get a new Hat, as his old one was getting shabby."³⁰

On Sunday the 9th, Joseph spoke to the new members at Brother Mitchell's home. However, Elder Taylor attended Brother Matthew's church and listened to him preach, taking notes, and then discussed this with Joseph, who wrote:

The Discourse was directed mainly against us. We feel sorry for those People; the Preaching was a lot of unmoving Matter, yet the People would not see the fallacy of it and are kept from hearing us.³¹

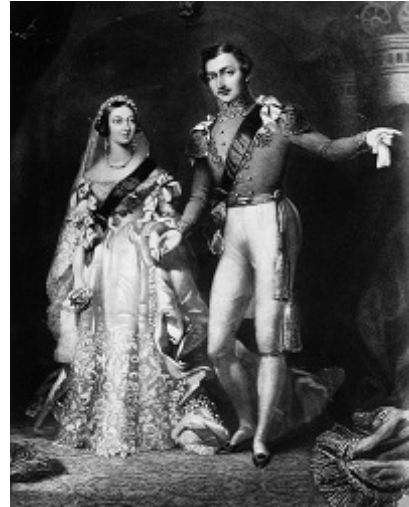
That evening the two men met with the new converts, instructing them and administering the sacrament. Those who had been baptized were confirmed. "The Lord was with us," Joseph wrote. He also mentioned that he had received a letter from his wife, who had moved back to Preston near her brother's home.

It appears that during the previous few weeks there had been trivial accusations against Hannah, who was uncomfortable in the presence of Jennetta Richards. Members of the branch in Preston had been unkind and Joseph was torn. Hannah had complained to her husband,, but Elder Richards had been communicating the difficulties to Joseph. At one point in January Joseph had written in his diary on this subject, "I want to judge righteously."³²

On Monday the 10th of February, 1840, the entire city of Liverpool “rejoiced on account of the Marriage of the Queen Victoria to Prince Albert.”

On Tuesday, Joseph received a letter from Willard Richards concerning the matter of Jennetta, Hannah, and the accusations by a third woman. Joseph wrote:

This Letter is a fine example of Acknowledgment & humility from one whom I love as a man of God & a Man of a Master Mind & great Integrity, against whom I feel to have nothing, and for whose appointment to the Apostleship I shall cheerfully hold up my Hand. I do not say he is perfect, nor do I say that any one else is. I answered this Letter according to my feelings, etc.³³



Queen Victoria married her cousin Prince Albert in February, 1840.

That evening, Joseph wrote, “Elder Taylor baptized 4.” Joseph did not mention that two of the four were George and Ann Cannon.

Later George Cannon would write his sister Leonora in Nauvoo, saying:

I bless the Lord that I ever saw your husband’s face, and I now see plainly that our dear mother’s prayer has not only been answered for you, but has extended to me and my family through you . . . I see the hand of the Lord so visible in all that has happened to me that I cannot help telling you of it. . . . I was happy in an affectionate wife, promising children, good health, plenty of work, and always a pound to spare – but still there was a want of something which made me feel very low-spirited at times. I strove to pray and to return due thanks for His mercies, particularly after some escape from danger of myself or family . . . but when Bro. Taylor came to Liverpool, and I was sincerely desirous to lead a new life, he had the words whereby I might be saved; and though slow of belief at first, and not seeing the necessity of baptism, yet God in his infinite mercy opened my eyes.³⁴

Joseph Fielding and John Taylor Meet with Timothy Matthews

The evening after the baptism, Joseph Fielding and Elder Taylor visited Timothy Matthews at the home of Brother Mitchell. Joseph wrote, “I felt a desire to see him. His Mind was much set against the Book of Mormon.”

Others were present, all of whom seemed determined to declare the Book of Mormon false. “They ran from one thing to another, no Order, but contention & Confusion.”

Joseph then wrote, “I saw that reasoning was of no use. My heart was pained, and I rose to give vent to my feelings by stating my going to America.” In context, he was clearly referring to his departure from England six years earlier. He reminded Timothy that “the feeling that prevailed in our Family [was] that the Hand of God was in it.” He then testified of his “Knowledge of the Work, of the Men at the Head. . . . I shewed them they were not seeking for truth but to shut their

Eyes against it, and warned them to be careful, etc.³⁵ Joseph continued:

I bore testimony to the Truth of these things, etc. Mr. Bradshaw said he could tell if a man had the Holy Ghost – yet could not tell how. We showed him a Man might have the Gift of Wisdom, etc. and he not see it; [we] told him he did not know what the Holy Ghost was.

Mr. M. asked Bro. Taylor where he got his Authority. Ans: By Prophecy and laying on of hands of those who had Authority, etc. This came by the Ministration of an holy Angel.

Bro. T. then asked where he got his. Ans: from the Bishop of Lincoln, and that was as good as his Angel, ‘and you have no more Power than I have and if you have, let us see it.

Mr. Matthews then demanded to see a sign, which was a common request from detractors. Joseph wrote that he and Elder Taylor responded, “We said we were sent not to shew Signs, but to call on all to repent, Priests & People.”

The Reverend Matthews “said in a high tone of Voice, ‘Do you call on me to repent? Bless God, my Sins are pardoned through the Blood of Christ; I have not them to repent of.’”

The rest of the evening turned hostile, to the point that at ten o’clock when Mr. Matthews and his associates were preparing to leave, one of the men asked for a prayer, and Joseph replied that “it would only be an Abomination.”

After the hostile group had departed, one man remained. Joseph wrote that they spoke to the man:

[Telling] him about the Book of Mormon & talked to him about their Pride and their Conduct in general, that they were casting away a precious Pearl before they had looked at it. After all were gone, Bro. T. spoke. . . a blessing for me for my testimony, etc.

We then left & got to our Lodgings just at Midnight. Sis. Cannon, who had been baptised just before, was in Bed. We had to call her up; she said she did expect to feel as she did & wished they felt as she did.³⁶

On Friday, February 14th, they received a letter from Wilford Woodruff in the Potteries. “All is well there. Bro. Turley is in Birmingham.” Theodore Turley, born in Birmingham in 1801, forty-five miles south of The Potteries, had relatives in that area. A few weeks earlier, Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal:

I am now in the midst of the Potteries which are so noted in England. The potteries include the following Market towns: Tunstell, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Laneend, & several other villages. The whole population of the Potteries in 1838 was 65,000. These potteries are for the manufacturing of English China, Crockery & stone ware of every description.³⁷

After a busy month of visiting with preachers and teaching the restored gospel to neighbors and relatives of the new converts, Joseph Fielding determined to return to Preston for a short time on the 27th. Before leaving for the train, he stopped at the Cannon home. He wrote of the generosity of new members George Cannon and Sister Chandler:

Bro. Cannon came into my Room & put into my Hand a Sovereign as a Loan, saying I might pay him when I could. I objected to take it, but he must have me take it. Bro. Taylor gave me 1..6 and Sis. Chandler 2..6. Got to Preston before 5.

This was the first time Joseph Fielding indicated that he rode the train as part of his missionary travels. The trains between Liverpool and Preston at this time were fraught with difficulties, with several lines competing against each other, and each line having their own depots, requiring passengers to walk with their luggage between stations. By about 1841 several of these lines merged, but in the beginning, travel by train was not always simple.³⁸

In Preston, Joseph met Thomas and Hugh Moon, who had come from Eccleston. Their father Matthias had died two months earlier, and they wanted to sell their stock in the family business and emigrate to Zion. Joseph's response to them was, "My mind is the same, etc.," indicating he didn't think the time was right. He found Hannah well, although she admitted that his absence of five weeks had been long.³⁹ Rachel was by this time eight months old, surely delighted to see her father again.

Joseph Fielding Speaks to the Saints in Preston on March 1st, 1840

Joseph's return to Preston was met with nothing unexpected. As the mission president, he received updates on problems and issues throughout the mission. He made arrangements for a Sunday meeting in the Temperance Hall, and on March 1st he and the members congregated there. After church business and the administration of the sacrament, Joseph spoke. He said:

[I] gave a kind of Report of the State of the Church in general. In Manchester the work was doing well, as also in the Potteries & Cumberland, etc. Spoke faithfully to them at some length. There had been much talk about the Gathering & some had been troubled through it. Those who were in Debt had been pressed by their Creditors, etc. I told them not to be hasty in the Matter, but if they wished to be ready for Zion [they must] pay their Debts, live in love, etc., or they would be unprepared at last.

Elder Richards spoke next, and then a local leader, Brother Whitehead, spoke of the needs of the wives of the local missionaries who were really in want. Joseph took the opportunity to speak again, saying, "It was not Priestcraft. . . I told them I knew the temporal Circumstances of the Elders, and that they did stand in need of help."

Another man "spoke a few Words on the same Subject," that missionaries had come from America and had "left all to bring the Gospel, etc., and now others were ready & willing to go out from them into other Places, but their Families must be taken care of, etc. Enough was said to shew the Church their Duty."⁴⁰

After this short weekend at home, Joseph left Preston again. Hannah and Rachel accompanied him as far as Longton, a journey of five miles. There they spend the night with friends, but the next morning, Joseph started his twenty-five mile journey on to Liverpool by foot.

He walked thirteen miles to Ormskirk, and then thirteen miles more to Liverpool. He wrote:

Had to mend my Pace. The day very fine; the Road as fine. I felt in good Spirits, got to Liverpool at half past 8.

There he met with Elder Taylor, who was “well & glad to see” him.⁴¹

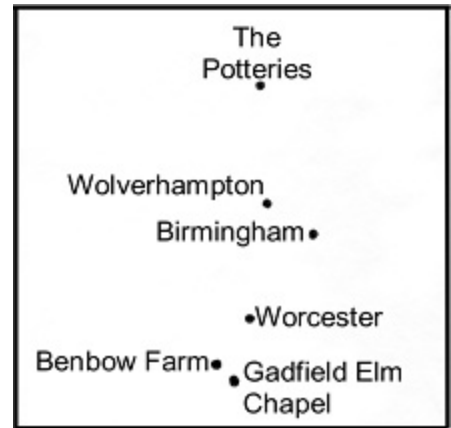
Wilford Woodruff Leaves the Potteries for Birmingham

After meeting with members of the Church in Hanley, Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal:

In the evening I again met with a large assembly of the Saints and strangers, and while singing the first hymn the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and the voice of God said to me, ‘This is the last meeting that you will hold with this people for many days.’

I was astonished at this, as I had many appointments out in that district. When I arose to speak to the people, I told them that it was the last meeting I should hold with them for many days. They were as much astonished as I was.

At the close of the meeting four persons came forward for baptism, and we went down into the water and baptized them. In the morning I went in secret before the Lord and asked Him what His will was concerning me. The answer I got was that I should go to the south, for the Lord had a great work for me to perform there, as many souls were waiting for the word of the Lord.⁴²



Wilford Woodruff, in the company of new convert William Benbow, traveled two days to reach the home of John Benbow.

In the company of William Benbow, a new convert of Theodore Turley’s who had joined the Church in Hanley, Wilford traveled to Wolverhampton and then by train on to Worcester, arriving on Wednesday. They then walked to a three hundred-acre farm owned by John Benbow, William’s brother. Wilford wrote:



Wilford Woodruff preached at the Benbow home in March of 1840.

I presented myself to him as a missionary from America, an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . Mr. Benbow and his wife received me with glad hearts and thanksgiving. . . . after receiving refreshments we sat down together, and conversed until two o’clock in the morning.⁴³

I rejoiced greatly at the news that Mr. Benbow gave me, that there was a company of men and women—over six hundred in number—who had broken off from the Wesleyan Methodists, and taken the name of the United Brethren. They had forty-five preachers among them, and had chapels and many houses that were licensed according to the law of the land for preaching in.



This pond on the Benbow farm was used for baptizing hundreds who had been prepared to hear the Restored Gospel. Photo courtesy of Geneil Harris.

This body of United Brethren were searching for light and truth, but had gone as far as they could, and were continually calling upon the Lord to open the way before them, and send them light and knowledge that they might know the true way to be saved.⁴⁴



Jane and John Benbow belonged to a group of religious dissenters known as the United Brethren. This chapel, built in 1836, was used by the Mormons until 1842, when it was sold to pay for emigrants to Zion. It has since been repurchased by the LDS Church. Photo courtesy of Geneil Harris.

I preached at John Benbows Hill farm in the evening & a number received the word & I Baptized 6. Mr. John Benbow & wife. . . 4 out of the 6 were preachers of the United Brethren of the Methodist order.⁴⁵

Gadfield Elm Chapel

Thank you for visiting the chapel and grounds.
Please help us to keep it tidy and peaceful.

Please feel free to enter the chapel.

The combination for the door can be worked out from the following clues:

- o ---- **Apostle Heber Kimball's middle initial ?**
- o ---- **How many chapters in the Book of Enos ?**
- o ---- **The age at which children can be baptised into the church ?**
- o ---- **How many Degrees of Glory ?**
- o ---- **How many books in the BOOK OF MORMON after the book of MORONI ?**
- o ---- **1st letter of Brigham's surname ?**

---- **Then turn the knob to the left.**

This sign on the door of the Gadfield Elm chapel allows LDS visitors to unlock the door. Photo courtesy of Geneil Harris.

The following Sunday, Elder Woodruff preached at several locations. That evening he spoke at the Benbow home. He wrote:

A man entered the door and informed me that he was a constable, and had been sent by the rector of the parish with a warrant to arrest me.

I asked him, 'For what crime?'
He said, 'For preaching to the people.'

I told him that I, as well as the rector, had a license for preaching the gospel to the people,

and that if he would take a chair I would wait upon him after meeting. He took my chair and sat beside me. I preached the first principles of the everlasting gospel for an hour and a quarter. The power of God rested upon me, the Spirit filled the house, and the people were convinced.

At the close of the meeting I opened a door for baptism, and seven offered themselves. Among the number were four preachers and the constable.⁴⁶

Joseph Fielding and John Taylor also had Success in Liverpool that Weekend

On Sunday March 8th, Joseph spoke to the members in the morning. He wrote:

A good time. We saw the pure fruit of the gospel. The Saints have about got over the troubles they have had through Mr. Matthews, etc., the young fish do the best. . . Several proposed to be baptised on Tuesday.

Two days later Joseph wrote, "Baptised 9."⁴⁷

In the middle of March, Joseph received a letter from Wilford Woodruff in the Potteries:

Says a Mr. Benbow took him to Ledbury in Herefordshire where he preached 6 times & baptised 32. 13 of them Methodist Preachers. . . he had not been opposed at all.

The First LDS Emigrants Leave England

At this time two new converts, George Tomlinson and Richard Moss, and their families, chose to emigrate. They boarded the ship *Susanna Cumming* in the Liverpool dock which was preparing to sail for New York and then travel on to Nauvoo. Joseph Fielding wrote letters to his sisters and sent them with these emigrants.⁴⁸

On a Thursday evening in March Joseph listened to a sermon in the Pitt Street Chapel in Liverpool, "A very handsome Building, well finished, with a good Organ." There he listened to the Reverend Newton, "a very popular Methodist Preacher." Joseph described the evening, and his choice of words reflected his sentiments:

We had to stand all the time; it was full & crowded. . . He is a clever Man, an excellent Speaker, and has a great Name. A Collection was made at the close. The Sermon was pretty good of the kind. My mind was filled with strange feelings while I saw such a Crowd of People assembled to hear, their Money and we must not open our Mouths in any of their Synagogues. They are rich & popular; Plenty is on their Boards & Grandeur their Temples. We have come from far to preach to the People a free Gospel, but we can hardly get a Place to speak in at all. They say the World hateth them because they are not of the World, yet you cannot tell them from the World. They imitate the World as much as they can and court its Favors – they are one with it. I long to speak to them & tell them that the Lord has spoken from the Heavens & has sent his Angel to make known to Mankind his Purposes, to renew his Covenant & restore the Everlasting Gospel with all its

blessings, etc., but we are told the Whole need no physician. We may therefore go into the High Ways, etc. . . . In the Midst this Babylon is very great . . . Each one of their Priests professes to see the Errors of all the others & to be teaching the truth himself.⁴⁹

Members of the Church Desire to Emigrate to America

Toward the end of March, Joseph received a letter from Francis Moon, who requested Joseph's permission to leave his wife and child and preach the gospel in the States, perhaps as a precursor to emigration. Joseph wrote:

[He requested] my Consent to his going to America. He is a Man of talent, has been in the Work I suppose more than 2 years. His Wife is an excellent Woman, can earn her own living, has but one child, perhaps 6 years old.

Joseph did not feel that it was appropriate for missionaries to leave their families in England and travel to America to preach the Gospel. At this same time Joseph received a letter from William Clayton, who asked a similar question posed by his wife's father, a relative of Francis Moon:

My answer to him was to this Effect, that we had had no directions as to the gathering yet, unless it be to let it alone, till Elder Kimball comes, & I should not give the Signal for its commencement. The Saints must be patient & wait the Lord's time.

Joseph then added a note in his diary, "O Lord give me wisdom."⁵⁰

On the 25th of March, Joseph, feeling lonesome, wrote Hannah in Preston asking for any news. With humor he made some suggestions with which she might respond, "I am well & Rachel is well. . . write to me, your loving Wife Hannah Fielding." He then wrote about himself:

I am Well. I never had better Health, you would think so if you saw my Face." He mentioned that he and John Taylor had become "real good Friends.

Joseph concluded his letter with a poem, the last line being:

Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus' Sake,
Your Husband, one, and thine forever make.⁵¹

Two days later he received a reply. Hannah wrote:

My Dear Husband, Agreeable to your request I sat down to write you a few lines hoping they will find you well as it leaves me at Present. Rachel is very tedious and cross has been several nights very troublesome. I don't know what's amiss with her, whether it's her teeth or something else.

Hannah commented on something which had happened at Church. Elder Richards had told the young people that they could wear ribbons and artificial flowers in their bonnets, "anything that will make them comfortable." This was at the height of vogue, and clearly Hannah, in a reflection

of her austere Methodist heritage, did not approve.

Hannah told Joseph that his letter had given “me great pleasure. Does me good when I read it and I shall read it over and over again and hope it will do me good another day.”

Hannah also mentioned, barely in passing, that James “is very badly and confined to his bed.”

She concluded the letter by saying:

Pray for me, my Dear Love, that my faith fail not. May the Lord bless you with every needful blessing and lead us into his Kingdom at last for Christ’s sake.⁵²

During this week Joseph received difficult news. Theodore Turley, serving in the Potteries with Wilford Woodruff, had been arrested. Joseph recorded, “a Man who is an Enemy claims to be a Creditor.”

Theodore said this was unjust, that there was no debt, but the man “sent the Sheriff & had him off to Jail. . . having no Money, Bed, or food.” The members of the Church were trying to assist “but this truly is a Hard case.” Joseph had discussed this specific situation with Theodore before he departed for the Potteries, because in Joseph’s experience, occasionally men left England for Canada because of debts. However, Theodore “did not seem to apprehend any danger.”⁵³

Wilford Woodruff Meets with Tremendous Success in the Potteries

The news of Theodore Turley came in the midst of miraculous occurrences in the Potteries. During this period Wilford wrote:

A preacher Called upon me & after I conversed with him a while he requested Baptism at my hands. I changed my clothing & as I got ready to go to the pool, three other preachers rode up in a gig or chariot to see me. The fame had gone out into all the country of the speedy work that God was performing. They had not heard me preach of any Latter Day Saint, but had come more than 20 miles to see me. They came down out of the Gig & walked to where I was. Notwithstanding they were Ministers, yet I stood up & boldly declared unto them Jesus & testified unto them the great work of God in these last Days, & the power of God rested upon us, & they bowed down & prayed & gave glory to God, & we all rose up & the Gig stood still & we all went down into the water at the Same hour & I Baptized them & laid my hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Ghost & they went their way rejoicing.⁵⁴

Elder Woodruff wrote Joseph Fielding and John Taylor of his success, and at the end of March Joseph recorded:

He had in 20 Days baptised about 70 Souls. Mr. Thomas Kington, Superintendent of 48 Preachers & 45 regular Places of Preaching. . . had opened the largest Field for Labor he has ever seen since he has been in the Vineyard. Baptised 24 of the said Preachers & about 46 of their members; is Baptising about 10 in a Day. While he was baptising one

Minister, three others came up in a gig, who had come 20 Miles, having heard the Fame. He began to preach to them; they bowed down, believed his testimony, went down into the Water & he baptised them, then laid his Hands on them & they went on their way rejoicing. This is glorious News. He is letting them go on as usual in their Preaching lest the Places should be taken up by some others, for the present.⁵⁵

By this time the two missionaries had been able to rent a hall in downtown Liverpool which would seat three or four hundred people. The location was on Renshaw Street, a very short distance from the Cannon home. Joseph Fielding wrote:

This is the first time we have had an Opportunity of preaching publicly in Liverpool. Through the Day we had not many; Brother Taylor preached both times. The feeling was good, especially in the Eve. I felt troubled at my Weakness, seeing my Preaching does not attract the People to hear as that of my Brethren does. I meet with many things to humble me, but I feel such a desire to see the Work of God go on that I can submit to almost any thing. I seem to be a weak thing with Bro. Taylor, but he does not triumph over me, but rather helps me on.⁵⁶

In early April a new convert from the Potteries, “Mr. Benbow,” who was William Benbow, the older brother of John Benbow, arrived in Liverpool with a letter of introduction from Wilford Woodruff. Joseph wrote:

He was on his way to America with his Family, his Wife and 3 Children. Bro. Taylor & I went with him, assisted him in obtaining Berths in the Ship *England* for N.Y. We got his goods on Board.⁵⁷

The Benbow family was the third LDS family in as many weeks who had emigrated from Liverpool for New York. Joseph later wrote that Brother Benbow’s departure was “his own will, perhaps not quite in the Order of God.”⁵⁸

Later that day, April 4th, Joseph left Liverpool by train, a ninety minute ride to Manchester. He wrote:

Was very cold when I got to the Saints. I was received with many Welcomes & sone Kisses, both from brothers and sisters; they are a truly loving set of Saints.⁵⁹

The next day he preached in their Sunday meetings, “plainly and faithfully, perhaps too much so.” He was taken sick that evening and mentioned that he slept until noon the next day.

Chapter 15 Endnotes Pages 240-255:

1. Wilford Woodruff, *Wondrous Worker, Prophet of God*, by Francis M. Gibbons, Deseret Book: 1921, pages 50-51. “Ashore, the unsuspecting elders were directed to a hotel, the ‘Birmingham Arms,’ whose accommodations hardly measured up to its high-sounding name. ‘May the Lord henceforth deliver me from such a place,’ Wilford wrote disparagingly. He was even less charitable in describing his breakfast and the high price charged for it.” Interestingly, these passages came after his fair description of his voyage, which included live animals which were butchered on board for the meals. Continuing, “After clearing their baggage, through customs the following day,

the missionaries went to Elder Taylor's brother-in-law, George Cannon, at No. 43 Norfolk Street. They left with him their provision chest and a bedding box. Carrying valises containing their clothing, they then went to the railroad depot, where they took a car [train] for Preston."

2. Waiting for the World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, pages 23-24. In his January 11th, 1840 entry, Wilford wrote, "We went into Liverpool & visited several Noted places the New Market, custom house, Lord Nelsons monument which is much Noted in England &c all of which were quite splendid. We took supper in white [depot] & lodgings in Church Street at the Birmingham arms <and may the Lord henceforth deliver me from such a place>." His next entry was on the 19th.

3. Wilford Woodruff, Wondrous Worker, page 51.

4. George Q. Cannon, A Biography, by Davis Bitton, Deseret Book Company: 1999, page 33. Brother Bitton and Wilford Woodruff provided the address.

5. During the short period that George worked in the California gold mines, he encountered a disreputable miner who shared his name. George adopted his mother's maiden name to differentiate himself from this other man.

6. History of David H. Cannon from a presentation given during a meeting with the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers in St. George, 19 February, 1922.

7. Cannon Family Historical Treasury, page 34. "The little we know of Ann Quayle Cannon indicates she was a very spiritual woman. She would later learn through the Spirit that she would die on the voyage to America, but she chose to go anyway out of fear that her family would take her children after her death and they would never reach Nauvoo, and Zion."

8. I have two living aunts who are grandchildren of the Apostle George Q. Cannon as of 2015. At the current time I serve in an assisted living center in our stake and attend church with 90-year-old Max Cannon, also a grandson of George Q. Cannon.

9. George Q. Cannon, A Biography, by Davis Bitton, Deseret Book Company: 1999, page 34. I feel a need to say that it feels a little surreal to look for sources to document stories from my family that I heard as a young girl.

10. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 47. I have been astounded at the distances Joseph Fielding walked during his mission, often 20 or 30 miles in a single day. This was his first mention of complaint. I have recently learned that the British poet William Wordsworth, a contemporary of Joseph Fielding's, was well-known for walking great distances and often wore out his companions. In 1790 he undertook a walking tour of Europe, visiting France, Switzerland and Italy. Joseph Fielding would have easily kept up with him, I'm sure.

11. History of the Church, Volume IV, page 76.

12. Life of John Taylor, page 75.

13. The Preston to Bolton line was opened in 1838. The line did not go all the way through to Manchester until 1841. It is possible that the missionaries took a train, or a series of trains, from Liverpool to Preston upon their arrival in England. Joseph Fielding mentioned taking a train from Liverpool to Preston in February, just a few weeks later.

14. Waiting for the World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, page 24.

15. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 49. I believe Brother Burrow was David Burrow, an Irishman and early convert who immigrated to Nauvoo with his wife Sarah and son William. David died while crossing the plains in 1850. Joseph Fielding wrote, "On Sunday Morn we met in the Street, standing in Deacon Burrow's Doorway to speak. Thus have the Saints done a long time, i.e. they have stood in the Street."

16. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 49.
17. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 50.
18. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 50, "Bro. T. Slept at his Brother-in-law's & I at the Tavern."
19. George Q. Cannon, page 34.
20. This letter, dated January 26th, 1840, is part of the Joseph Fielding Letter Collection, MSS 670, held at BYU's Special Collections. The letter was address to "Mrs. Fielding, No 8 Kirkham St, North, Preston," and Joseph wrote that he was "At Mr. Cannons, 13 Norfolk Street, Liverpool".
21. Life of John Taylor, page 76.
22. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 51.
23. Life of John Taylor, page 77.
24. Life of John Taylor, page 77.
25. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 51-52.
26. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 52.
27. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 53.
28. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 53.
29. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 53-54.
30. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 54.
31. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 54.
32. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 53.
33. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 55.
34. Cannon Family Historical Treasury, page 36. Davis Bitton recorded the baptismal dates of Ann and George Cannon, which are attached to their record in Family Tree.
35. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 55. I previously used the reference to Joseph's family being united in his departure for America, where they all apparently agreed that the Lord was behind it, at the beginning of this biography. This was the context. Joseph was defending the Church and the Book of Mormon, and he believed that the Lord had directed him to Canada so he could learn of the restored gospel and bring it to his family, and all of whom, except his sisters Mercy and Mary, rejected it.
36. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 55-56. I wrote the direct quote from Joseph Fielding's journal. I wondered if he meant to say "she did *not* expect to feel as she did."
37. Waiting for the World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, page 25.
38. I found myself interested in the British train system and tried to learn about it. One helpful source was found at <http://www.madeinpreston.co.uk/Rail/railwayhist.html>.

39. Joseph Fielding Diary page 59. I had to extrapolate what Joseph said about his wife. "Found my Wife well, but had been afflicted with the Cramp in her Stomach far more than she told me of; she did not like to complain. She had been expecting me sooner, and I had been five Weeks out."
40. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 60.
41. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 61.
42. Leaves from My Journal: A Journey of Faith, by Wilford Woodruff, reprinted in 2005, pages 99-100.
43. Leaves from My Journal, page 100; Things in Heaven and Earth, by Thomas G. Alexander: 1993, page 92.
44. Leaves from My Journal, page 101.
45. Waiting for the World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, page 26,
46. Leaves from My Journal, pages 102-103.
47. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 61-62.
48. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 64. Joseph did not mention the content of his letter. He simply said, "Wrote to my Sisters in America to go by the Brethren who went down to the ship."
49. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 64, dated the 19th of March.
50. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 65.
51. This letter is part of the Joseph Fielding Letters Collection, written March 25th, 1840, postmarked from Liverpool March 26 1840.
52. Hannah's reply to Joseph's letter is part of the Joseph Fielding Letters Collection, written and was postmarked in Preston, 27 March 1840.
53. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 66.
54. Waiting for the World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, pages 26-27.
55. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 68. This was from the first paragraph in Book Three, dated March 31, 1840. The letter had arrived during breakfast the previous day.
56. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 68.
57. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 69.
58. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 69-70. John Benbow, well-known in Church history, emigrated later that year, in September of 1840, with an organized group of two hundred Saints. I looked through the records of his family and believe that William Benbow was this particular immigrant, although Joseph didn't name him specifically, only his surname.
59. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 70.