

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 4

Methodists in Toronto

In 1832, the Methodists in Toronto¹ were associated with a parent organization in the United States. This connection caused disagreements between Methodists and Anglicans, with the latter continuing to assert that the Methodists must be loyal British citizens. At this time there were several branches of Methodists in Toronto. One group was the Primitive Methodists who closely followed the teachings of Charles and John Wesley. Others associated themselves with New Connexion Methodists, although the separations among these Methodists were sometimes more political and less religious in nature. New Connexion members tended to have both Conservative and Radical political parties.

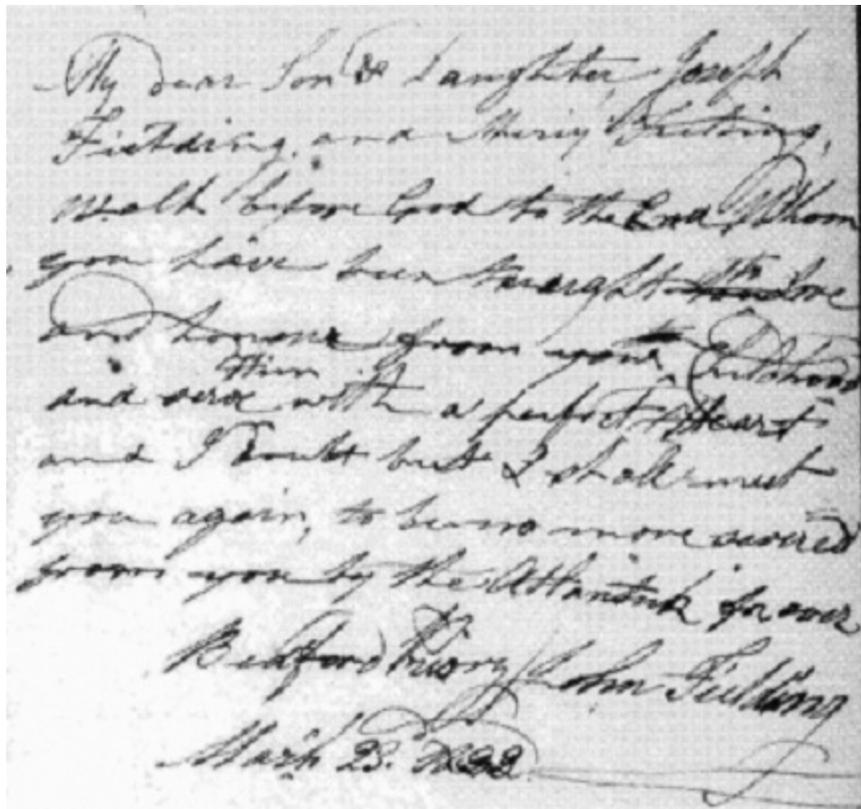
A prominent minister at this time was Egerton Ryerson who published a weekly newspaper in Upper Canada titled the *Christian Guardian*. Reverend Ryerson encouraged his fellow Methodists to support Church leadership in their desire to merge with the British Wesleys, which finally occurred in 1833.

Joseph and Mercy Fielding Survive a Difficult Time

With only several hundred Methodists in Toronto in 1832,² it is likely that Leonora Cannon found a good friend in Mercy Fielding. Mercy, just twenty-four years old, had immigrated that year with Joseph who soon went to work on a gentleman's farm, likely with the prospect of later acquiring the property.

However, shortly after they arrived in Toronto, the gentleman died, leaving Joseph and Mercy relying on their own limited resources. Mercy was able to procure work in the homes of wealthy associates, likely members of their church, but for a short time their futures were in limbo.³

In late 1832 Mercy wrote Mary Fielding from Toronto, explaining their difficulties and the rescue by their friends. It appears that after receiving Mercy's letter, a traveler to Canada offered to take letters from the family to Joseph and



My dear Son & Daughter, Joseph
Fielding, and Mercy Fieldings,
Walk before God to the end, whom
you have been brought to love
and honour from your childhood
and were with a perfect heart
and I doubt but I shall meet
you again, to be no more
separated from you by the Atlantic for ever
Bedford Row, London, England
March 23. 1833.

In 1833, the aged John Fielding wrote Joseph and Mercy in Canada.

Mercy. Their father John, sister Ann, and Mary each wrote letters, with brother-in-law Timothy Matthews penning a note at the top of Mary's letter.⁴

Seventy-seven-year-old John Fielding, living in the priory with Ann and her family, sent a brief message to his son and youngest daughter:

Walk before God to the End, Whom you have been taught to love and honour from your Childhood and serve Him with a perfect Heart and I doubt but I shall meet you again, to be no more severed from you by the Atlantic for ever.⁵

Mary wrote:

I greatly rejoice that the Lord so manifestly shows his regard for you, my Mercy, in opening the hearts of your dear Friends so kindly to consider your situation & circumstances. I trust their benevolence and Christ-like [actions] will be abundantly rewarded . . . pray give my love to them all and tell them that I feel as much obliged by their kindness to you as if it was shown to myself.⁶

In the midst of their difficulties, Joseph was appointed to be a class leader, a great responsibility. He wrote his family telling them of this position. Ann commented on this in her 1833 letter:

O my dear Joseph what an important office is that of leading of souls & how necessary that we who are thus honored should take care to keep foremost or we shall be in danger of keeping them back instead of urging them forward.⁷

Joseph appears to have reversed his financial disappointment quite rapidly because Ann included this comment in her letter, "O my dear Joseph, I had rather heard that you were labouring thus, that you were hoarding up an independency of a thousand a year. May the Lord bless you & prosper you & make you very successful in this glorious work. . . ."

Ann included some muslin for Mercy, asking Joseph to tell her that the English ladies were preparing to wear bonnets in the coming summer.

Interestingly, in this 1833 letter Ann spoke of "the Church [rising] to all power & glory of the primitive the Apostolic age before the coming of her Lord to receive her to himself." As the wife of a minister, and with her father a retired minister living in her household, Ann, although the mother of four young children, appears to have been comfortable with the prophecies in the New Testament.

Mary's letter written the same week spoke of the coming of the Savior and her belief that it would be soon. Mary went so far as to ask Joseph if his congregation in Canada spoke of these things.⁸



John Taylor was among those who emigrated to Canada in 1832.

John Taylor Emigrates to Canada in 1832

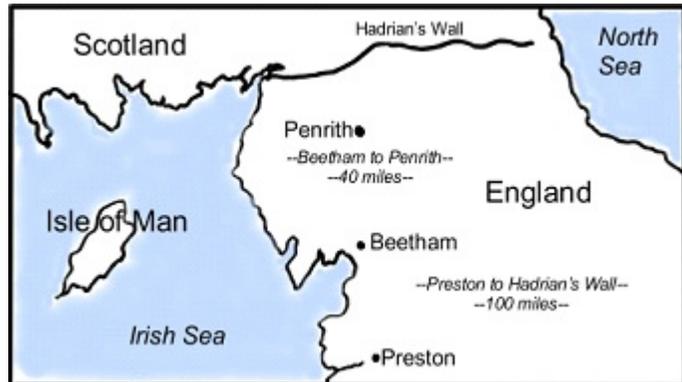
Other British immigrants arrived in Toronto in 1832. John Taylor, twenty-three years old, traveled alone. As an infant, John had been christened into the Anglican Church where his parents were



John Taylor saw an angelic vision as a child. Drawing by Robert Fitt.

“nominal members,” although they taught John that the Church of England was the “true one, and that the ‘Roman Catholics were a dreadful set of fellows.’”

John Taylor’s biographer, Brigham H. Roberts, mentioned that “It may be said that part of the Church of England’s creed in those days, though unwritten, was ‘down with the Pope.’” Perhaps Brother Roberts was too kind, as any study of British history indicates that the creed had been openly practiced by most British kings since King Henry VIII.



John Taylor’s family lived in Beetham and Penrith. His wife Leonora Cannon was raised 90 miles away on the Isle of Man.

The Taylor family lived in the small country town of Beetham and later Penrith, the area being about sixty miles south of Hadrian’s Wall near beautiful castles and “splendid scenery.”

As a small boy, John saw a vision of “an angel in the heavens, holding a trumpet to his mouth, sounding a message to the nations.” John did not understand this vision, but he did not forget it, either. Interestingly, by 1833 the Reverend Timothy Matthews was standing on a stool blowing a trumpet to gain the attention of his congregants.¹⁰



The Church of England’s break with Rome began in the 16th century.

John first heard Methodist doctrines when he was sixteen. His biographer wrote that he “perceived more spiritual light and force in their teachings than in the cold, set services of the Church of England, [and] he became a Methodist. He was strictly sincere in his religious faith and very zealous to learn what he then considered to be the truth.” John prayed frequently, studied the Bible and even at this young age reached out to those around him in an attempt to encourage them to live a better life.

At age seventeen, John was called to be a local preacher for the Methodists and he and a companion were given the assignment to speak in a neighboring town about seven miles from Penrith. While on their journey, John “suddenly stopped, overpowered by a peculiar influence,

and as he stood there in the road, he remarked to his companion, ‘I have a strong impression on my mind, that I have to go to America to preach the gospel!’ At the time, he knew nothing of America but what he had learned in his geography school. . . . so strong was the voice of the spirit to him on that occasion that it continued to impress him as long as he remained in that land.”

By age twenty, John began his own business as a turner, skillfully building spindles for furniture, but within a year his family emigrated to Upper Canada. John remained behind to sell some family property. As the cholera epidemic spread north, he surely hastened to emigrate. While onboard the ship across the Atlantic, a severe storm came upon them which lasted several days. From the bow of the ship John could see the wreckage of other ships destroyed by this storm. The officers warned the passengers that their ship could go down, too, but John was not afraid. He continued to hear the voice of the spirit saying to him, “You must yet go to America and preach the gospel.” John later wrote, “So confident was I of my destiny that I went on deck at midnight, and amidst the raging elements felt as calm as though I was sitting in a parlor at home. I believed I should reach America and perform my work.”

He landed at the port in New York and spent time in Brooklyn. On his way west, he stayed in Albany, with a delay of about two months, earning money to continue his journey. Twenty-three-year-old John was reunited with his family in Toronto late in 1832.

John Taylor Marries Leonora Cannon

Because of John Taylor’s education and experience as a lay preacher, he was soon asked to be a class leader, perhaps serving alongside Joseph Fielding. The spiritual experience six years earlier “clung to him, that he had some work to do which he did not . . . understand.”¹¹ He soon fell in love with Leonora Taylor, twelve years his senior, to whom he proposed.¹² She rejected his offer of marriage.

A surviving letter between Leonora and her older brother George Cannon indicates that their mother had been worried that Leonora would never find a suitable husband.¹³ Perhaps her concern was that Leonora was too selective with whom she chose to spend time. However, as in the case of Leonora’s resettling to Toronto, and after declining John Taylor’s offer of marriage, she had another dream in which she saw herself “happily associated” with him.¹⁴ Perhaps through the succeeding decades filled with trials, she clung to this dream of assurance that she had made a divinely-approved decision.

When John proposed a second time, Leonora accepted. They married in January of 1833. B. H. Roberts described Leonora as refined in nature and education, “gentle and lady-like in manner, witty, intelligent, gifted with rare conversational powers, possessed of a deep religious sentiment, and withal, remarkable for the beauty of her person.” Elder Roberts, a member of the First Council of the Seventy at the time he wrote this biography, concluded that Leonora Cannon “was a fitting companion to John Taylor,” and who “frequently accompanied her husband in filling his appointments to preach on the Sabbath. . . .”



Brigham H. Roberts was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1888 by Elder Taylor and published his biography of the prophet in 1892.

After their marriage, John “often alluded to the singular revelation he had received in his youth, about his having to preach the gospel in America.” At these times, Leonora would ask, ‘Are you not now preaching the gospel in America?’” John would respond, “This is not the work; it is something of more importance.”

“As a preacher in the Methodist church, both in England and Canada, [John] was very successful and made many converts. ‘My object,’ he remarked, ‘was to teach them what I then considered the leading doctrines of the Christian religion, rather than the peculiar dogmas of Methodism.’”¹⁵

Cholera Reaches Canada

As the cholera endemic continued to kill thousands in the Old World, officials in the United States, no longer satisfied that the Atlantic Ocean would be a sufficient barrier, took action to prevent the disease from entering their ports. Philadelphia, Boston and New York City constructed quarantine facilities for all immigrants. However, in early June of 1832, cholera struck in Montreal and Quebec, killing thousands. American officials enacted a version of France’s *cordon sanitaire* at the border of New York state and Canada, but these measures were insufficient. Cholera killed two young Irish immigrants in New York City before the end of June and then spread throughout the city. Thousands of residents evacuated to the country where they felt it would be safer. Cholera soon spread west from Quebec and by 1833 over a thousand had died in Toronto.

Lady Aylmer personally helped and aided the families of the victims. John Goodson, who had only recently arrived in Toronto after fleeing the cholera epidemic in London, lost his wife Emma in the Toronto epidemic. John performed several concerts in Toronto throughout 1833 to raise money for the families of the cholera victims.¹⁶ In one concert, he sang a new song specially written for the event. It is possible that John Taylor, a skilled vocalist, sang with him.¹⁷

Isaac Russell’s older sister Isabella Walton, the mother of eleven children, was widowed during the cholera epidemic. Living nearby was their sister Sarah Kavanaugh, the mother of six children and who had been widowed for several years. Their sister Mary had died in 1826. Isabella and Sarah also assisted their brother-in-law Jackson Wanless with the care of Mary’s six children, the oldest being Ann, who was nineteen.

The bacteria which causes cholera was unknown at that time, but residents of large cities felt that the countryside was healthier. This belief could have been based on the simple concept that perhaps because of low industry, fewer immigrants who might carry the disease settled outside of cities. Many Toronto residents sought to find a way to leave the capital, and it was at this time that the new community of Charleton, about eight miles north of Toronto, was settled.

Charleton Settlement

This community near Black Creek¹⁸ was initially settled by the Charleton family, but others soon acquired nearby property.¹⁹ Isaac and Mary Russell sold their home in Toronto and bought one hundred acres in Charleton. After building a home, they moved their young family with two children there, again bringing Isaac’s parents to their new residence.

The following year their son Samuel was born, who later would recall the names of fifteen families who initially settled this area. Also moving to the Charleton settlement was Isaac's sister Fanny and her husband John Dawson, parents of eleven children.

The widower John Goodson moved to Charleton, as did John and Mary Snider with their four children. Isaac assisted the other settlers in building their own meetinghouse a half mile east of Black Creek,²⁰ and he directed the choir.²¹

John Taylor and his wife Leonora, now the parents of a son named after Leonora's father, remained in Toronto and lived not far from Isaac's widowed sister Isabella Walton.

Robert Blashel Thompson Emigrates from England

Robert Blashel Thompson emigrated to Upper Canada at this time, possibly settling in Charleton. Twenty-three years old, Robert had emigrated from Yorkshire. He had embraced Methodism while still in England and had preached as a lay minister before emigrating. He would marry Mercy Rachel Fielding in 1837.²²

Mary Fielding Emigrates to Toronto in 1834

Joseph Fielding's industriousness allowed him to buy a farm in Charleton. Joseph later wrote, "I lived as a farmer about 5 years, during which time the Lord was very kind to me, as to temporal things."²³ Joseph built a home where he and Mercy lived. In 1834, Mary joined them after finding the resources to emigrate from Preston.

Eight years later, after Joseph had returned from England to the States after his mission and was farming in Nauvoo, his brother-in-law George Greenwood wrote from England with a comment which reflected Joseph's success in Canada. "I hope to hear of your prosperity even as much as you prosper'd in Canada."²⁴

The Search For Truth

John Taylor later wrote that while living in Toronto, he associated with a group of gentlemen who were "learned and intelligent," who searched the scriptures together for two years. They were connected with the Methodist Society, but "did not believe their doctrines because they did not accord with scripture." John named several who studied with them, including John Goodson, John Snider, Isaac Russell and Joseph Fielding.²⁵ It is known that the group was large.

Of this time, Joseph Fielding, who kept a journal from 1837 to 1859, wrote:

I had for some time been much interested in the subject of the Millennium . . . by reading the Word of God. I was fully convinced that the Christian world . . . was in a very different state to what it was supposed. As to the second coming of Christ, it was almost entirely denied or misunderstood. . . . Many believed that a certain number were chosen out of Mankind as the favorites of Heaven, without any condition whatever on the part of man, and as so small a portion of mankind were righteous, they of course concluded that

all but those few would be, or were, doomed to eternal misery. Perhaps there is not sentiment maintained by Man more revolting or more awful than this, but it is altogether impractical and needless for me to enter into a detail of the multiplied opinions of Men.

The more I write of them or think of them the more I am astonished at the darkness of the age in which I live . . . Truly darkness hath covered the earth and gross darkness the people, but I trust that the time is not far distant when the Light shall shine forth in the midst of the darkness, a time or period from which we may look back into the early days of the 19th century, the enlightened age of the 19th century as it is called, something like as a man looks back on a night of gloomy darkness, after the sun has spread his bright beams over the face of nature.²⁶

While I was thus standing in Methodist Society I began to see that all was not right, having for sometime been looking at the scripture prophecies I saw plainly that they were not understood by professing Christians, that they contained something of far greater importance than the preachers or commentators of the day had ever set forth . . . I plainly saw that they mangled the word of God. At this I was often much grieved, so much so that I had but little comfort in attending the meetings and was constrained often to pray the Lord to send us the Gospel in its fullness and power, that he would raise up and send men as in days of old pastors after his own heart that should feed us with Knowledge and Understanding.²⁷

John Taylor wrote that his study group, “examined every religious principle that came under our notice, and probed the various systems as taught by the sects, to ascertain if there were any that were in accordance with the word of God, but we failed to find any.”

Other Religious Movements were Also Seeking Spiritual Gifts

A religious movement known as the Catholic Apostolic Church, led by Edward Irving, and at some point also by George Ryerson, Reverend Ryerson’s brother, was finding followers not only in England, but also in Upper Canada. They taught of a need to receive the spiritual gifts which were prevalent at the time of the Savior. They also taught that apostles and prophets were necessary.

Surviving letters from James Fielding to his brother Joseph at this time indicate that James followed the doctrine of the Irvingites, as they were known, although he did not join their movement. Their sister Ann Fielding Matthews wrote Joseph and complained that almost thirty of her husband’s congregation in Bedford were stolen away by the Irvingites.

There is no question that the doctrines taught by the Irvingites were examined by John Taylor’s study group, as Joseph Fielding had specifically mentioned Edward Irving, and John Taylor would later speak of Irving’s doctrines. However, it does not appear that any in the group were convinced enough to join with them.²⁸

John Taylor reported that his group of associates studied the doctrines of the New Testament and “gathered from the scriptures many important truths.” They believed the Lord’s true church

would have prophets and apostles and that Israel would be gathered. They believed that “gifts of healing and the power of God” ought to be present. He wrote:

We, of course, believed that where these things did not exist there could not be a true church. But we believed that we had no authority ourselves to teach these principles. We were praying men In addition to our researches and investigations, we prayed and fasted before God, and the substance of our prayers was that if he had a people upon the earth anywhere, and ministers who were authorized to preach the gospel, that he would send us one.²⁹

Study Group Members were Called to a Hearing

In his biography of John Taylor, Elder Roberts wrote:

So wide and thorough an investigation of religion, by such a body of men, could not fail to attract some attention, especially from the church with which the most of them were nominally connected. The leading men in the Methodist church called a special conference to consider the principles of these heterodox brethren. The meeting was called and presided over by some of the most prominent leaders in the Methodist persuasion in Canada, among whom were the Rev. Mr. Ryerson and Rev. Mr. Lord, of the British conference.³⁰

Elder Roberts wrote that Reverend Ryerson, well-known because of his weekly newspaper, established “a hearing...not a trial pro forma, but rather a friendly discussion of those principles held by the brethren in question.” He continued, “The hearing continued through several days ; and in the debates the ‘heterodox’ held their own against the learning and talent of the church leaders, and at the conclusion of the investigation expressed themselves as being more fully confirmed in their doctrines since their learned opponents had been unable to refute them by the word of God.”³¹

The conference reached a conclusion. The members of the study group could remain in fellowship, hold their current teaching positions and believe their doctrines as long as they did not teach them, even though these doctrines came from the New Testament.³²

The men felt they could not honestly comply with this directive. As a result, any of the men who held an office in the Methodist church, including John Taylor and Joseph Fielding, were relieved of their duties, although these men were welcome to attend classes as members. “Since they considered the Methodist Church without authority, taking from them their offices was not regarded by them as a hardship.”³³

James Fielding Closely Followed the Canadian Study Group

Word of their discipline reached James Fielding in Preston who appears to have immediately written several letters to Joseph. The first letter does not survive, but James began his second dispatch by referencing the earlier letter stating his concern that Joseph might not have received it because he was unclear on Joseph’s location.³⁴ James’s letter is filled with scriptural references

and reads as though these passages were put together as part of a sermon, or possibly several sermons. Perhaps these words were repeated in the letter for Joseph's benefit, with the belief on the part of James that his words would be shared with the members of John Taylor's study group.³⁵

The letter makes clear that James was aware that the group has been chastened by the Methodist leaders in Canada. In his earlier letter James "suggested that your duty would probably now be to stand as a people desolate and without ordinances, rejected by your father and mother and waiting that, 'The Lord might take you up.'"

However, after receiving Joseph's letter, James felt a need to change his directive to the group. "I would not have you to be hasty in acting upon this." It appears as though James believed, as a prominent minister in Preston, that he was guiding the members of this small group in Toronto who were praying and waiting for the truth to be given to them. No mention of James' involvement was ever mentioned by group members, but this letter tells us today that their actions were being closely followed in England.

James's use of scriptural phrases are those of a minister well-versed in the Old and New Testament. "If your brethren will sell you into Egypt simply because in love you declare the truth, the act is theirs & not yours." James made a distinction between those who separate themselves from the main body, and those who are cast out. "[B]lessed are ye when *Men* separate *you* from *their* company."³⁶ James strongly encouraged Joseph and his associates not to distance themselves from the Methodist Church, not out of concern for their salvation, but because he believed that taking that action would not follow the scriptural pattern. He wrote that Christ and the Old Testament prophets were "cast out for the truth's sake."

John Taylor explained that his group, through study and prayer, had come to believe that the Lord's true church would have apostles and prophets. It seems as though Joseph Fielding, in a bond of brotherhood with James and in a joint effort in the search for truth, had shared the group's conclusions with him via letters across the Atlantic.

It is easy to read into James's letter that his congregation felt the same way as the members of John Taylor's group. There is no question that Edward Irving's doctrines of the need for apostles and prophets in anticipation of the Second Coming of the Savior were extremely popular and well-known in England. One sentence in particular from James's 1835 letter underscores his knowledge of the Irvingite beliefs:

Seek not to build yourselves, but cry to the Lord the only builder that He would build you. Cry that He would send for His Apostles. Since I last wrote, there was a word from the Lord in the midst of the Council of the Church saying, that 'the Lord would send forth His Apostles and Prophets to America.

James ended his letter with a reference to a passage in Zephaniah by saying, "The day of the Lord greatly hasteth."³⁷

James's words were reminiscent of their sister Ann's letter the previous year when she wrote that

“the Church will rise to all the power & the glory of the primitive Apostolic age before the coming of the Lord to receive her to himself,” indicative that her husband Timothy Matthews shared these beliefs with his Primitive Episcopal Church. That James and Ann spoke so freely to Joseph about this shows that the search for apostles was not something Joseph’s study group had discovered for themselves. The need for apostles, as was had in the Primitive Church, was likely in Joseph’s mind and heart before he left for America.

Religious professors and historians today have noted the great interest in Millennial topics in this time period of the early nineteenth century. One wrote, “As huge armies marched across the European continent and regimes toppled, events triggered by the French Revolution excited an atmosphere of Millennial prophecy and expectation unparalleled since the [British] Civil War. Serious study of the prophecies reached high tide in England in the late 1820s and 1830s.”³⁸

James Fielding Discusses the Need for Apostles with Joseph Fielding

James’s concluding reference in his letter concerning apostles was intended to alert Joseph to the imminent arrival of William Caird, a preacher from England whose teachings had been well received. The doctrines he taught included that “God had raised up apostles in England and organized . . . [a] great, universal. . . true church, only needing the restoration of apostles and gifts. . . . [God] was sending preachers from thence into all the world to prepare the way for the coming of the Son of Man.”³⁹ Perhaps James thought apostles would just spring up and announce themselves.⁴⁰ Perhaps he imagined, as a supporter of Mr. Caird, he might be one of these apostles.

Reverend Timothy Matthews Returns to the Church of England

In a letter composed seven months later, James, writing from Preston, informed Joseph, Mary and Mercy that their brother-in-law Timothy Matthews had been forced to leave his own congregation and return to the Church of England, presumably with their sister Ann following. The reasons were not doctrinal, but financial. James grieved over Timothy’s decision.⁴¹ A later letter from Martha included the information that Timothy and Ann’s family were very poor, each having only one set of clothing to wear, and that Timothy’s were so shabby that he was scarcely fit to leave the house.⁴²

James’s letter was very enlightening as to his feelings and desires. His sister Martha was living with him, and he spoke of the two of them waiting for news from their siblings in Canada. Martha was very involved with his congregation, visiting the sick and caring for the poor.⁴³ James believed he was living at the end of times, and he saw prophetic warnings in recent weather events and an earthquake in northern England. Interestingly, he mentioned that Halley’s comet was visible in the night sky and asked if Joseph could see it. His congregation had one hundred and fifty members, with a recent meeting filled to overflowing, and he was in the early stages of raising funds for a new building. James had nothing good to say about “our national church,” accusing their priests of deliberately buying land to prevent dissenting religions from obtaining property.

James also spoke of his “temporal embarrassments,” but he had faith in a passage from Mark 9, “All things are possible to him that believeth.” He wrote that he should “be delivered . . . with

scarcely any exposure which I think will be quite miraculous.” Living in a culture where the ministry was often sought as a source of profit, he had reason to be proud of his accomplishments. He spoke of the devotion of a particular congregant, saying:

. . .if called to it she would lay down her life for her minister. . . . Several others are drinking into the same spirit, as if the whole church were in this happy state, how would God work, how would sinners fall before the power of the word, I believe notwithstanding all our difficulties etc we shall have a glorious church.

In a reflection of his knowledge that Joseph was a farmer, James shared Bedfordshire crop prices from a copy of the Bedford newspaper, which apparently he received by mail in Preston.

Chapter 4 Endnotes, Pages 56-65:

1.The Methodist Churches of Toronto, pages 13-16.

2.The Methodist Churches of Toronto, page 15, “By 1826 the membership of the first Methodist church in Toronto had reached 200.”

3.Young Woman’s Journal, IV, April 1893, page 290, from Mary Fielding Smith, Daughter of Britain by Don C. Corbett, Deseret Book: 1974, page 17.

4.Mary’s letter is dated 18 March 1833. Ann’s letter was dated 22 March 1833. John’s letter was dated March 23. Ann’s husband penned a note at the top of Mary’s letter. The letters do not show postmarks, indicating they were hand-carried.

5.This letter, referenced earlier, is now in the Church History Museum as MS D 2779 Folder 6. The return address was “Bedford Priory/John Fielding.” The letter was dated March 23rd, 1833. The letter is the first in a collection titled “Mary Fielding Smith Collection,” and is with other letters written to the three American Fielding siblings between 1832 and 1848. Often these letters were identified by brief descriptions of their content. In this case, either Mary or Mercy later penciled in, “from my beloved Father.” This letter would have been carefully packed and taken from Canada to Kirtland, then to Missouri and Nauvoo, and then across the plains to Salt Lake City. Ultimately these letters were given to the LDS Church. This letter is now digitized and at the time I am writing, can be seen online at this link: <https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/MS%202779/>.

6.18 March 1833, Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding.

7.A typed transcript of this letter has been preserved in the LDS Church History Library as MS 7618 F0003 00011. The date is 23 March 1833, one day later than a letter written by John Fielding to Joseph and Mercy in Toronto. The letters, which included a parcel containing at least muslin, were likely carried by the same hand, but I chose to address them separately. A third letter, which I will address later, was written in 18 March 1833 from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy. Timothy Richards penned a note at the top.

8.18 March 1833, Letter from Mary Fielding to Joseph and Mercy Fielding. Mary mentioned that her brother-in-law Timothy Matthews had met with “an enlightened Jew,” who had told them that according to his calculations “the Messiah will appear within 7 years.” Mary then wrote, “I shall be glad to hear in your next whether it is at all thought of or entered into in that part of the world.” The Fieldings often spoke of “next,” or “last” in referring to recent letters.

9. The quotes from President Taylor’s early life come from The Life of John Taylor, by B. H. Roberts, Salt Lake City: 1892, pages 25-28.

10. Mormons in Early Victorian Britain, pages 49-50.

11. The Life of John Taylor, page 28.

12. I have read hundreds of British marriage records. I first came across this phenomenon, so different from American culture, in Sussex County when researching my Driver/Boulter line. The brother to my third-great-grandfather married a woman twenty years his senior. This woman's daughter joined the LDS Church in England and helped her step-cousin, my ancestor Charlotte Boulter Driver, when she first arrived in Salt Lake City in 1864. Since then I have seen that it was extremely common in the 19th century, if not the norm, for a woman in her 30s to marry a man five to ten years younger and then have a family.

13. This letter is referenced in the Cannon Family Historical Treasury on page 36. George, upon meeting Leonora's husband John Taylor, wrote to her in Kirtland. "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. . . ." I realize I'm reading between the lines, but I know all mothers have prayers for their daughters.

14. Cannon Family Historical Treasury, page 33.

15. The Life of John Taylor, page 30.

16. John Edward Goodson has his own page on Wikipedia.

17. I could find no mention of John Taylor and John Goodson performing together. However, as a musician myself, I know how these things work. In my mind, it is highly probable they sang together at church and other events.

18. It has not been easy finding the location of this settlement. We are fortunate that Samuel Russell named the early residents of Charleton, which included the Charleton family, but no given names of this family were stated. Samuel states that Charleton was nine miles north of Toronto. I was able to find a home page online for Black Creek Pioneer Village which seems to be in the right location. This pioneer museum is located in Toronto today near the intersection of Steeles Avenue and Jane Street, but in the 1830s, the Charleton settlement was eight or nine miles out of town. As I researched Isaac Russell's family, I came across a bound description of the Isaac Russell Family Collection which is contained in the Special Collections Vault, MSS 497, of BYU's Special Collection. Page one of this volume states that the Charleton settlement would today be included in the Downsview area, which is about four miles closer to Toronto than the Black Creek Pioneer Village. References from the mid-1830s included the landmark of Black Creek as being associated with the Charleton settlement.

19. In a letter dated 17 July 1837 from Mary Russell Kirtland to Isaac Russell in England she mentioned "Mr. Charleton" as the one holding the mortgage on their property. I could find nothing else about this man. This letter is part of the Isaac Russell Correspondence Collection held at BYU's Special Collections, MSS 497.

20. Samuel Russell's excellent biography of his father included this detail.

21. Remembering the Impact of British Missionary Isaac Russell.

22. The Biography of Robert Blashel Thompson, written by his widow, Mercy Rachel Fielding, from History of the Church Volume IV, pages 411-412

23. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 1, states, "I lived as a farmer about 5 years, during which time the Lord was very kind to me, as to temporal things."

24. This letter, dated 1842 (internal context gives the day as September 13th), was written by George Greenwood to Joseph and Hannah Fielding in Nauvoo. This letter is part of the Joseph Fielding Correspondence Collection at BYU's Special Collections. The context of the letter is an explanation of why George was not emigrating as he

had intended, but the sentence was sincere, George wished Joseph and Hannah the best in their new community.

25. The Gospel Kingdom: Selections From the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor, Third President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by John Taylor, Salt Lake City: 1964, page 367.

26. Joseph Fielding Diary, pages 1-2.

27. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 2.

28. Two letters in particular are referred to in this paragraph. Ann Fielding Matthew's letter of January 1837 gives the names of those who joined with the Irvingites. She describes crude treatment by these followers against her husband, and the distress these events had caused her. While her letter was written several years after Joseph was part of the study group in Toronto, it gives an indication of the effects this new religion had on the Fielding family. James doesn't mention the Irvingites specifically, but the doctrine in his letters clearly indicates he was familiar with their teachings and had embraced much of the doctrine for his own congregation. These letters are the second and the seventh letters in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, MS D 2779 Folder 6. In addition, Joseph Fielding specifically named Edward Irving in the very first paragraph of his diary. The typed transcription I am using had misspelled his name, but in fact Joseph wrote "I had for some time been much interested in the subject of the Millennium, etc., which had been revived by Edward Irving, a Scotch minister in London. . . ."

29. The Gospel Kingdom: Selections From the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor, by John Taylor, Bookcraft: 1964, pages 366-368.

30. The Life of John Taylor, pages 32-33.

31. The Life of John Taylor, page 33.

32. The Life of John Taylor, page 33.

33. The Life of John Taylor, page 33.

34. This letter was sent in the care of Mr. Patrick. Mr. Patrick is later identified in this biography as William Poyntz Patrick, a wealthy man who offered his home where the study group could meet. On page 22 of the British book, Truth Will Prevail, edited by V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, and Larry C. Porter, published in Solihull, England in 1987, William Patrick is described as "a wealthy aristocrat, [who] had served as a class leader for the Methodist Episcopal Church and at that time held a position in civic government as clerk of the House of Assembly."

35. The letter is found in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, 1833-1845, MS D 2779, Folder 6. It is the second letter in the collection and is not signed. I have compared the handwriting of this letter to a known letter by James and another by John Fielding and I believe the author was James. A factor I considered was that John, while well-versed in the scriptures, was a farmer living in Graveley. In context, the letter, dated 17 March 1835, fits well to have been written by James, a preacher who was apparently repeating to Joseph excerpts from sermons he had given to his congregation. The letter reads as though it was a compilation of several sermons. This particular letter was written from London, 44 Greater Marlborough Street, which is now a very prosperous part of the Soho. Joseph's later references to James indicated that he often traveled to other cities to preach in various congregations, this being a typical practice at the time, possibly a prosperous one.

36. Emphasis is in the original document.

37. I am working on this particular paragraph in July 2014. A current catchphrase in the LDS Church is "hastening the work." That James ended his letter with this phrase definitely caught my attention. There are several references to this concept in the scriptures. I suspect that James was directly referring to Zephaniah 1:14, "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly...." Another passage is from Isaiah 60:22, "A

little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in its time.” The scripture the LDS Church is using at this time comes from D&C 88:73, “Behold, I will hasten my work in its time.” The phrase is so common in the Church today that I was almost stunned to see James end his 1835 letter with it.

38. *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism*, by Grant Underwood, University of Illinois: 1993, page 131.

39. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, page 135.

40. I admit I wrote that sentence as a faithful member of the LDS Church who believes the Lord had an organized plan to authorize apostles to speak in his name. Later it is clear that James and his brother John believed that the Heavens were closed and that there could be no new revelation, The only way apostles, by James’ definition, could be sent was for them to publicly declare who they were.

41. This letter, briefly referred to earlier, is the third letter in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, 1833-1845, MS D 2779 Folder 6, and was dated between the 23rd and 26th of October 1835 from Preston where James was living. By that time he had a well-established congregation. James wrote: “You will be surprised to learn that brother Matthews is returned to the old Church again. It seems owing to pecuniary difficulties, they were in great danger of being distressed by legal proceedings, so that they were almost compelled to offer the church for sale. It was offered to Mr. Donn, I think for about 2,000 pounds (something under), but I believe no bargain has yet been made. Mr. M. has however offered himself again as a clergyman in the established church and is on probation for three (or four) years. I am sure you will feel much surprised and I think grieved to hear this.” In a much later writing by Willard Richards of his mission to Bedford, found in the *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, 15 August 1842, pages 1879-1884, he wrote, “Mr. Matthews told the elders [John Goodson and Willard Richards] that he had received two ordinations, one from Bishop West, whom he had proved to be an impostor, and another from the church of England, which he acknowledge to be descended from the church of Rome, and he further acknowledged that he had no authority from God for administering in the ordinances of God’s house.”

42. This 1835 letter, possibly dated November 25th, was from Martha to her siblings in Canada. She wrote: “We had a letter from Bedford on Monday. They are all pretty well in health but their circumstances are very poor. Brother says they have but one suit of clothes each and his are so shabby as scarcely fit to go out of doors in.” Martha’s letter is the fifth letter, MS D 2779 Folder 6, Fielding Family Letters Collection, 1833-1845.

43. Information about Martha’s involvement with James’s congregation, or society, as Martha called it, comes from an 1835 letter Martha wrote to her sisters in Canada. She spoke of who was ill, who was dying, and the strength of these persons’ testimonies and a measure of their faith. It was in this letter where she mentioned the condition of the Matthews family in Bedford. I would describe Martha acting as a modern LDS Relief Society president. This letter is the fifth in the Fielding Family Letters Collection, very difficult to read, but in Martha’s hand. Her style of writing is very different from James’s style. He is quite preachy, quoting scripture often. Martha’s letters are charming, newsy, loving. In this particular letter, written in November, she mentioned a fat goose which a member of the congregation had given them for Christmas. Being as the holiday was a month away, the assumption on my part was that the goose was alive, based on a similar experience my grandmother shared about Christmas goose given to her about 1925. Martha’s letter is preserved as MS D 2779 Folder 6, letter 5.