

The World of Joseph Fielding: Chapter 7

The Fielding Siblings Arrive in Kirtland; Mercy Marries Robert Thompson

Joseph, Mary and Mercy Fielding along with Robert Thompson and other Canadian immigrants, arrived in Kirtland in late May of 1837 where they were met by the prophet Joseph Smith

During the first week of June, Mercy, one week shy of her thirtieth birthday, and Robert Blashel Thompson, then twenty-six, were married by the prophet. Mercy wrote about meeting Joseph Smith for the second time at her wedding. “I again met him at Brother John Gaylord’s house in Kirtland, where a small company of friends had gathered to witness the ceremony of my marriage to Robert B. Thompson, the Prophet performing the ceremony.”¹

Joseph Fielding wrote that soon after their arrival, “I . . . witnessed there a marriage of my sister Mercy to Brother Robert Thompson, a Priest in the Church.”²

Mercy wrote:

There were present on this occasion several of the Twelve Apostles with their wives, also the aged Patriarch Joseph Smith and his wife—the father and mother of the Prophet—and also my brother Joseph Fielding and my sister Mary. . . . After the marriage ceremony was over we listened with joy and profit to the words of instruction and counsel which fell from the inspired lips of Joseph Smith, each word carrying to our hearts deeper and stronger convictions that we were listening to a mighty Prophet of God. And yet there was not the slightest appearance of ostentation or conscious power on his part; he was as free and sociable as though we had all been his own brothers and sisters, or members of one family. He was as unassuming as a child.”³

During the week following their marriage, Robert and Mercy made plans to return to Canada to serve a mission under the leadership of John Taylor. Before leaving Kirtland, Mercy received her patriarchal blessing at the hands of Joseph Smith’s father in the Kirtland Temple.⁴

Mary, age thirty-five, lived at the home of Vilate Kimball, the thirty-one year old wife of apostle Heber C. Kimball who was leaving for New York and on to England with Joseph Fielding.⁵ Mary had desired to accompany her brother and the apostles to England so she could be part of the group which preached the restored gospel to her siblings. However, finances were tight, difficulties were anticipated, and the decision was made for Mary to remain in Kirtland.⁶



Joseph Smith performed the marriage of Mercy Fielding and Robert Blashel Thompson.



Vilate Murray Kimball and Mary Fielding became close friends.

Mary referred to Sister Kimball as “a Christian old friend.” She was kind, gave friendly counsel, and treated Mary as she would her own sister. The two of them occasionally had dinner with Joseph Smith and other Church leaders, including their wives and other leading women.⁷

Apostasy and Persecution in Kirtland

During the few weeks Joseph Fielding was in Kirtland, he encountered the terrible storm of apostasy which John Taylor had seen in March. Joseph, by now forty years old, wrote:

On my arrival at Kirtland I was much cast down and troubled. I found the Saints were far from being all righteous. There was great contention among them. . . .During two or three weeks stopping there I witnessed [several who accused the prophet Joseph]. I forbear to say more, but pray the Lord to guide us in the right way, that His work may proceed and be accomplished.⁸

Despite this difficult time of apostasy, the missionaries were determined to leave on their missions. On Sunday, June 11th, a scribe wrote for Joseph Smith:

[A] high council meeting was held in Far West with John Whitmer and W. W. Phelps presiding. That evening [in Kirtland], [I] was engaged in giving some special instructions to Elders Kimball and Hyde, and Priest Joseph Fielding, concerning their mission to England, President Brigham Young came into my house, where we were sitting, accompanied by Dr. Willard Richards, [the two of whom had in the past week] returned from a special business mission to New York, Boston, and other eastern cities.⁹

Willard Richards

Willard Richards was a thirty-three year-old bachelor. He and his older brother Levi had both trained as doctors and practiced medicine in



Massachusetts. Both brothers had joined the Church there just six months earlier after learning about the Book of Mormon from their cousin Brigham Young. Brigham Young and Willard Richards had been sent on a mission to the eastern States together in March. Upon their return, they found the missionaries preparing to leave for England.

The next day, Monday June 12th, Willard told Hyrum Smith and Sidney Rigdon that he had promised Heber C. Kimball earlier that year that if at all possible, he would accompany him on his mission to England. Hyrum, then bearing the title of Assistant President of the Church, and Sydney Rigdon, the first counselor in the First Presidency, “set their hands upon his head and set him apart for the English Mission,” as Joseph Smith was not feeling well.¹⁰

Willard Richards was one of the original seven missionaries to England.

Parley P. Pratt, after the fact, wrote:

At length, Joseph Fielding, Isaac Russell, John Goodson and John Snider, of the Canada Elders, were selected for a mission to England. Elders H. C. Kimball and Orson Hyde, of the quorum of the Twelve, were selected to go at the head of the mission, and Elder Willard Richards was appointed to accompany them.¹¹

Four of these missionaries were leaving for New York City from Kirtland, with three of the Canadian missionaries departing from Toronto. Arrangements had been made for the members of the British Mission to meet in New York City on June 21st before sailing to Liverpool. They took hundreds of copies of the newly published Book of Mormon with them.

Joseph Fielding wrote:

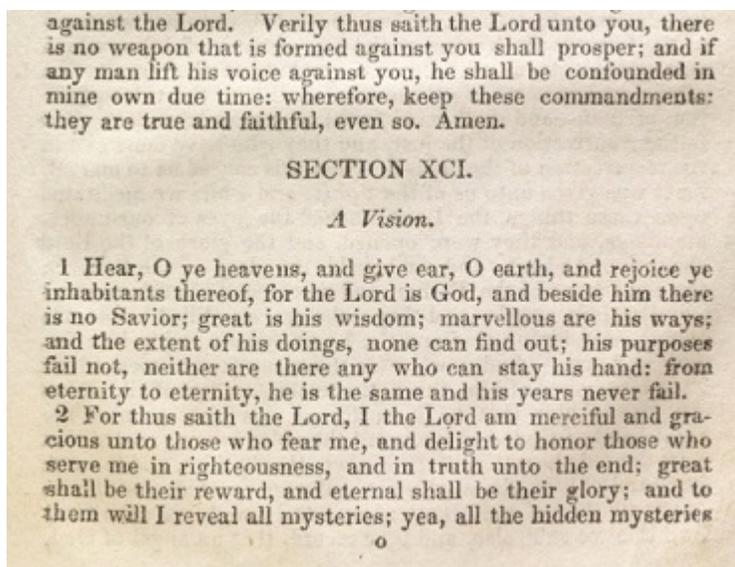
I fully believed that this was the work the Lord designed me for, as well as others of my family. It was told me in my patriarchal blessing that I was a literal descendant of Joseph, that if I were faithful the Priesthood should be conferred upon me. Of course my father's family were of the same tribe, and I hoped they would all come to the same Priesthood or be connected with it. This was my highest ambition. I prayed much that the Lord would prepare my brethren to receive the truth in its fullness as I had received it.¹²

The departing missionaries called upon the prophet before leaving Kirtland, but Joseph Smith was so ill that he could not lift his head from the pillow.¹³ However, he had previously spoken with them about their labors:

My instructions to the brethren were, when they arrived in England, to adhere closely to the first principles of the Gospel, and remain silent concerning the gathering, the vision, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, until such time as the work was fully established, and it should be clearly made manifest by the Spirit to do otherwise.¹⁴

Joseph Smith's admonition focused on teaching faith, repentance, baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. He specifically told these missionaries not to begin teaching about the gathering, which ultimately would bring thousands upon thousands of British converts to Utah.

He also asked them not to teach "The Vision." This vision, revealed in 1832, was received by Joseph Smith



The prophet Joseph Smith asked the departing British missionaries not to teach of the 1832 revelation given to him and Sidney Rigdon about the three heavens.

and Sidney Rigdon in the home of John Johnson in Hiram, Ohio while in the presence of several other people.¹⁵

The 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants included this revelation as section XCI where it was simply titled, “A Vision.”¹⁶ Today this revelation is included in the Doctrine and Covenants as Section 76 and describes three kingdoms of glory.

Heber C. Kimball

Elder Kimball was nearly thirty-six when he received the call from Joseph Smith to lead the mission to England. He was almost overwhelmed with this responsibility and wrote:

[To] preach in that land, which is so famed throughout Christendom for learning, knowledge and piety, the nursery of religion, and to a people whose intelligence is proverbial However, all these considerations did not deter me from the path of duty; the moment I understood the will of my Heavenly Father, I felt a determination to go at all hazards, believing that He would support me by His almighty power.¹⁷



Heber C. Kimball and Joseph Fielding remained close friends throughout their lives.

Elder Kimball was born in Vermont of parents whose ancestors had emigrated from England during the time of the Winthrop Fleet of 1630. His father was thirteen years old at the end of the Revolution in which his father, Heber’s grandfather, had been a soldier.

As a result young Heber grew up regaled with war stories by his father. At the age of nineteen, Heber apprenticed with an older brother to learn the potter’s trade, and within two years he had established his own business in Mendon, New York, twenty miles from Palmyra. In 1822 Heber married Vilate, who was just sixteen.

On the night of September 27th, 1827, Heber, his wife, and a guest, Fanny Young, with their neighbors, witnessed a vision in the night sky where they saw an army marching. The vision was so clear that they could see individual soldiers who carried muskets, bayonets and knapsacks, and who wore caps and feathers as the American soldiers did during the Revolution.

Heber heard their steps, the jingling of their war implements and the report of arms when a battle ensued. He wrote:

It seemed as though every hair of my head was alive. This scenery we gazed upon for hours, until it became to disappear. After I became acquainted with Mormonism, I learned that this took place the same evening that Joseph Smith received the records of the Book of Mormon from the angel Moroni. John Young, Fanny’s father, and [John P. Greene and his wife Rhoda, Fanny’s sister,] were also witnesses. My wife, being frightened at what she saw, said, ‘Father Young, what does all this mean?’ ‘Why it’s one of the signs of the

coming of the Son of Man,' he replied, in a lively and pleased manner.¹⁸

Brigham Young

The large Young family had moved to Mendon, New York, in 1828. The Greene and Young families were connected by marriage, as Rhoda Young, Brigham Young's older sister, was the wife of John P. Greene. By 1832 a branch of the LDS Church was established in Mendon with the Young, Greene and Kimball families as strong members.

Brigham Young's wife Miriam died of tuberculosis before the end of the year, and Vilate Kimball cared for Brigham's two daughters. In 1833 the Kimball's moved with the Young family to Kirtland where for a time they shared the same home.



Brigham Young desired to go to England in 1837 with his close friend Heber C. Kimball but was told by Joseph Smith to remain in Kirtland.

In early 1834 Brigham Young married Mary Ann Angel, and that summer both Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young marched with the rest of Zion's Camp to Independence, Missouri, to help settle the problems there. At the end of their journey, as Heber was assisting in the burial of those struck with cholera, he was afflicted with the illness. Brigham Young's advice had been to run and jump around the field. Possibly his advice stemmed from an ancient folk treatment for insect bites, and with their knowledge of the cause of cholera limited, this might have seemed logical. To everyone's good fortune, Heber was cured. The company returned to Kirtland and worked in earnest to complete the temple.

Late in the winter of 1835 Brigham and Heber, along with Parley P. Pratt, were called to be apostles. Each served missions in the east, and the following year the Kirtland Temple was dedicated.

During the winter of 1836 when apostasy was rife in Kirtland, Elders Young and Kimball remained faithful to Joseph Smith and were stalwarts in defending the young church. In June of 1837, when Joseph Smith asked Elder Kimball to lead the mission to England, Heber asked if "Brother Brigham might go with me." Joseph replied that he had other work for Brigham to do, which would, within the year, include presiding over the Church in Missouri with the quorum president, Thomas B. Marsh and another senior apostle, David W. Patton. Apostle Orson Hyde, who had served in Canada with Elder Pratt, and who by this time was the father of an infant daughter, was chosen to go.

Missionaries Leave Kirtland on June 13th, 1837

Robert B. Thompson, with his new wife Mercy, were ready to leave Kirtland and return to

Canada, where they would join John Taylor in the missionary work there.

They planned to travel as far as Buffalo with the missionaries heading toward New York City, where the British missionaries would then travel east on the Erie Canal and the Thompsons would head north into Canada. Robert later wrote:

The day set for the departure of the Elders to England being come, as I was passing by the house of Brother Kimball, I stepped in, wishing to ascertain when he would be ready to start, as I expected to accompany them two or three hundred miles; intending to spend my labors in Canada that season.

I unconsciously entered the house, the door being partly open. When I entered, I felt struck with the sight which presented itself to my view, I would have retired, thinking that I was intruding, but I felt riveted to the spot.—The father who was appointed to superintend the mission to England, had been pouring out his soul to that

‘God who rules on high,
Who all the earth surveys;
That rides upon the stormy skies,
And calms the roaring seas,’

that he would grant him a prosperous voyage across the mighty ocean, and make him useful wherever his lot should be cast, and that He who ‘careth for sparrows’ and ‘feedeth the young ravens when they cry,’ would supply the wants of his companion and little ones in his absence. He then like the patriarchs, and by virtue of that office, laid his hands upon them, individually, leaving a father’s blessing upon, and commending them to the care and protection of God, while he should be engaged in preaching the gospel in distance lands.

While thus engaged, his voice was almost lost in the sobs of those around, who tried in vain to suppress them. The idea of losing a protector and a father was indeed painful. He proceeded, but his heart was too much affected to do so regularly; his emotions were great, yea, unutterable; and he was obliged to stop at intervals, while the big tears started down his cheeks—an index to the feelings which reigned in his bosom. I was not stoic enough to refrain, but in spite of myself I wept, and mingled my tears with theirs; at the same time, I felt thankful, that I had the privilege of contemplating such a scene.

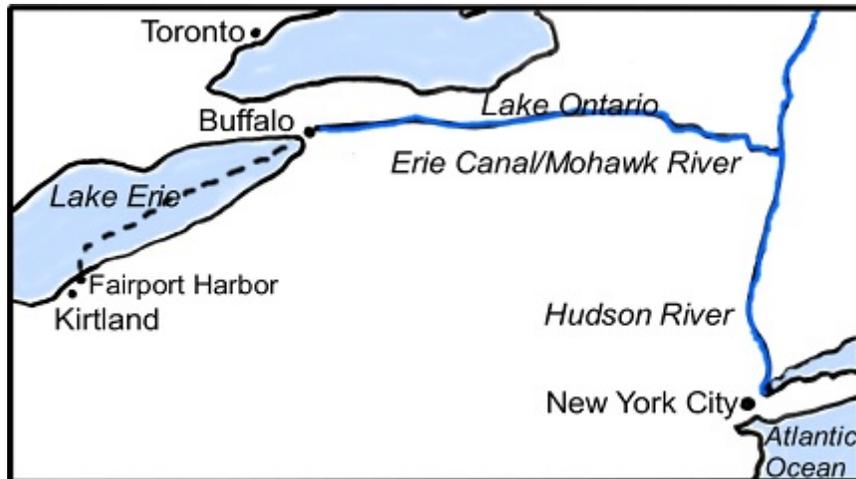
Nothing, thought I, could induce that man to tear himself from so affectionate a group, from his partner and children who are so dear to him—nothing but a sense of duty and love to God, and attachment to his cause. I prayed that the Lord would bless the labours of his servant, give him a prosperous voyage, make him a blessing in my native land, by bringing many into the Kingdom of Christ—that he would be merciful to his family; and when it was wisdom in God that he should return, that he might be brought home in safety, and rejoice with his beloved family in recounting the mercies of the Lord.¹⁹

Before departing, Mary Fielding gave Elder Kimball five dollars which he used to pay the fares of some of those traveling with him as they boarded a steamer on Lake Erie for Buffalo, one

hundred and sixty miles away.²⁰

On Tuesday, June 13th, Elder Kimball, Elder Pratt, Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding left Kirtland. They were accompanied by Elder Young, John P. Greene, Levi Richards, and others who were also departing on missions. Mercy and Robert B. Thompson, on their way to Canada, were included in this group.

They were accompanied to Fairport Harbor by Vilate Kimball, Rhoda Greene and Mary Fielding. From Fairport Harbor, the missionaries traveled overnight by steamer to Buffalo, where the Canadian missionaries headed north and the British missionaries headed east to New York City by way of the Erie Canal.²¹



On June 13th, 1837, four of the British missionaries, accompanied by other missionaries, friends and family members, traveled 12 miles from Kirtland to Fairport Harbor, where they boarded a steamer for Buffalo. This route to New York City via the Erie Canal, rivers and train would cover 600 miles, but was much quicker than if they traveled the direct route 450 miles overland.

Robert and Mercy Fielding Thompson Arrive in Toronto

Robert and Mercy Thompson left the group at Buffalo and crossed the boarder into Canada. As Joseph Fielding embraced his brother-in-law, neither man knew that it would be for the last time, as Robert would die within four years, leaving Mercy a widow, only a few months before Joseph returned from his mission.

Mercy and Robert had a “quick and pleasant journey to Toronto and were received very “kindly.” However, after their arrival, there were difficulties in their accommodations which called for some endurance. Of this situation Mary Fielding wrote:

I sincerely wish it was in my power to alleviate them all, but I do think I am called to endure my share. I suppose we shall do well to keep in mind that this is a time of discipline for us all. These small trials are only to prepare us for a greater.²²

Mercy had packed what she thought she would need, but upon their arrival, she couldn't find some essential items. Mercy wrote her sister Mary and asked her to go through the boxes she had left and look for her clog boards, wooden shoes worn while working. She also asked for white handkerchiefs. Mary looked for these without success and then kindly responded, “I think you must have overlooked them.”²³

Missionaries Travel to New York City

Before saying their final good-byes, Joseph Fielding waited in Buffalo with his sister Mercy and

Robert Thompson where they planned to meet John Taylor who was going to give Joseph funds for his mission.

Brother Taylor did not arrive, and this was a cause of great worry to Joseph. Elder Kimball wrote:

We expected to have got some funds which were promised us, to assist us on our journey, but were unfortunately disappointed. At that time we had but very little means, but still we determined to prosecute our journey, believing that the Lord would open out our way.²⁴

It is most probable that John Taylor had concluded the sale of Joseph Fielding's Charleton property in his behalf. Later John and Robert Thompson would attempt to negotiate a second mortgage on Isaac Russell's property, although they were not successful.²⁵

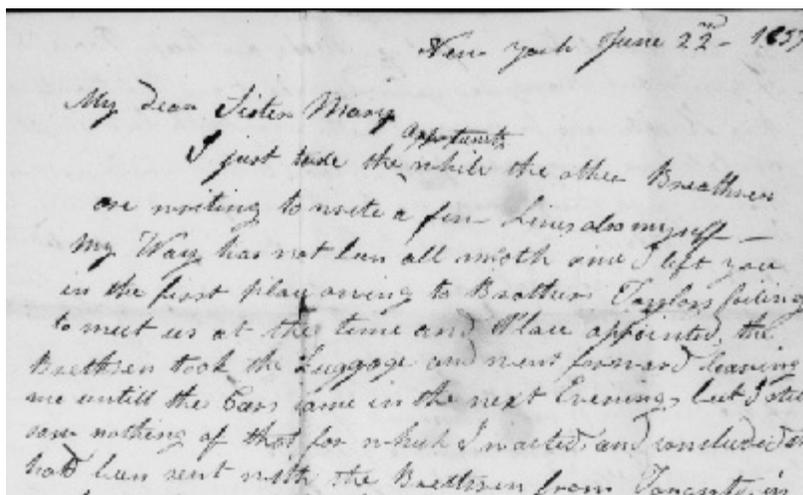
Elders Kimball and Hyde and Willard Richards took all their luggage on their barge moving along the Erie Canal, and left Joseph, who was determined to wait for Elder Taylor. He waited a full day, but when John did not appear, he concluded that the necessary funds had been sent with the three Canadian missionaries, John Goodson, Isaac Russell and John Snider, who were going to meet them in New York City.

Once he had that realization, he "[hastened] to overtake those who had gone before,"²⁶ unintentionally passing them before reaching Utica, their planned meeting place, two hundred miles east along the Erie Canal. "I stopped for the Night, and found them just arrived on Monday morning," which was six days after leaving Kirtland.

Orson Hyde had gone ahead to New York, but Joseph traveled with Willard and Heber for ninety miles by train until they reached Albany. At that point Heber accompanied Willard to visit the latter's father, who lived only thirty miles away in Massachusetts.²⁷ While there, one of Willard's brothers paid him forty dollars to cover a past debt, money which was providential to all.²⁸

Upon arriving in New York City the next day, Joseph met Elder Hyde, who had subsequently been joined by the three Canadian missionaries. However, the hoped-for funds were not with them. Joseph wrote Mary, "I have several times been a little cast down, but nothing has grieved me like this."

He regretted that he had not borrowed money in Kirtland because he was unable to acquire



New York June 22 - 1837

My dear Sister Mary

I just told the ^{appointments} while the other Brethren are waiting to write a few lines also myself my way has not been all smooth and I left you in the first place owing to Brother Taylor's failing to meet us at the time and place appointed, the Brethren took the Luggage and went forward leaving me until the boat came in the next evening, but I still saw nothing of that for which I'm acted, and conclude I had best have sent with the Brethren from Toronto in

Joseph Fielding's first letter from New York City to his sister Mary expresses his deep concern that John Taylor did not meet him in Buffalo with expected funds.

a loan in New York. Within three days Elder Kimball and Brother Richards arrived in New York and on Thursday the 22nd Joseph wrote his sister Mary, “We are all for the first time met together this Evening and find that with care we have Means among us to carry us through. I suppose the Lord intends to keep us humble.”²⁹

Having said that, he then confirmed with Mary that he was owed the money from Brother Taylor, and when John arrived in Kirtland, Mary was to “Positively get the Money from Bro. Taylor.”



The money must have been a considerable sum, and it is clear that Joseph was very disappointed in his good friend.

The British missionaries planned to cross the Atlantic Ocean on the packet ship *United States*, but the berths filled before they acquired tickets.

Joseph told Mary that they planned to sail on the packet ship *United States* on Saturday June 24th. Packet ships, small and fast sailing ships, had risen in popularity for two decades. Since the completion of the Erie Canal, many travelers from the interior took the opportunity to travel on from New York City to England and Europe. A common news item was the speed with which the latest packet ship had traveled across the Atlantic.

While accommodations on these small ships were cramped and crowded, their popularity did not wane.

By this time Joseph was full of faith and wrote:

As to our Mission we are in good Spirits, believing the Lord will be with us and will bless us. We are his Servants and we are his Children, his People. . . .I see more than ever of the wickedness and blindness of this Generation when I got into N. Y. and saw its greatness, its pride, and I thought, ‘What am I that I should be going forth in the Midst of such haughtiness and Grandeur? . . . I still feel my meekness, but I believe that the Lord will give me his spirit as I need. . . . Pray for us.

Before ending the letter, he thought again about the money owed him by Brother Taylor and said, “If you get Money I think it would be well to let Sister Kimball have some. Be faithful and the Lord will bless you.”

There were three postscripts to this letter. Two referenced the money, still worrying him, and Joseph asked Mary to send the money from Brother Taylor with any missionaries who might follow. The third note was a comment written by Joseph concerning a prophetic quip Orson Hyde had made about Mary’s apparent charm. “Bro. Hyde says he shall see you again but he shall not see Mary Fielding!!!”

It appears that a feeling of camaraderie was growing among these missionaries. With Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding being the only bachelors in the group, they endured some teasing about their marital state. At one point on the voyage, Heber consoled Joseph by saying, “Never mind, Brother Joseph, I am going to baptize you a wife when we get to England.”³⁰

Presumably Joseph's letter to Mary was mailed on Friday morning. On Monday June 26th, Joseph wrote Mary a second letter. "You are surprised we are still in NY. We fully expected to sail [on Saturday] but we could not engage our Passage . . . the berths were all taken up."

Despite this setback, Joseph seemed quite pleased with the turn of events, saying "It was at first a great trial to us that we could not go as we expected. . . It was all for the Best." The ship on which they finally booked passage would sail on Friday. In the meantime, they had been able to stay in "a newly built Warehouse" owned by the father of Elijah Fordham, "and thus saved the expense of Lodging and lived much cheaper." Elijah, a seasoned convert, seems to have been willing to do all in his power to assist the missionaries.³¹ Joseph explained to Mary that the missionaries had desired "to get a close Union with each other, and have time together, and [we] think we are much better prepared to enter our important Work. We trust the Lord will be with us and prosper us. You must all pray for us."

Mary Fielding Remains in Kirtland, Writes to Mercy in Canada

Unbeknownst to Joseph Fielding, the money he felt he desperately needed arrived in Kirtland the week after he left and was given to Mary before his letters to her arrived. She wrote Mercy soon after this, saying:

I supposed you will have heard of poor Joseph's disappointment after waiting so long at Buffalo. What do you think I felt when I found on Saturday evening that the Man had brought the money through to Kirtland? I assure you I felt a while distressed above measure but I could do nothing but pray and endeavor to submit with all the patience I could muster. We have not yet heard anything from them and therefore cannot tell what steps Brother J took.³²

"The Man" might possibly have been Elder Pratt, who returned to Kirtland from his mission to Canada soon after the other apostles left for New York.³³

While Joseph Smith Lay Dying, Elder Pratt Turned Against Him

Joseph Smith, who was quite sick when the missionaries departed, became deathly ill within a few days. By Wednesday Joseph was being treated by Levi Richards. Mary Fielding reported to Mercy that Joseph Smith "appeared to be so far gone that Brother Rigdon told us that he should not recover naturally, speaking if he did not live till night."³⁴

Joseph Smith later wrote that while in this weakened state, "the enemy of all righteousness was suggesting, apostates reporting, and the doubtful believing that my afflictions were sent upon me, because I was in transgression, and had taught the Church things contrary to godliness."³⁵

In a letter written on the morning of Sunday, June 18th, Mary Fielding told Mercy that with Joseph Smith still confined to bed and unable to attend the meeting in the temple, Elder Parley P. Pratt, who, with his brother Orson had turned to a state of apostasy, took "upon himself the Services of the morning. . . . He labored through to show that nearly all the Church had departed from God and that Brother J. S. had committed great sins. . . ."

It appears that Elder Pratt had been accused of infidelity when his wife was alive but this “he profusely denied He affirmed that such reports had only been raised through envy and malice.”

Mary Writes that Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery Supported Joseph Smith

The afternoon service was no better, according to Mary:

. . .the scene of confusion that presented itself I shall never forget. Elders Pratts, [Warren] Parish, & many other disaffected ones were present, when Brother Rigdon bowed down with the sad condition of the Church and the situation of dear Brother Joseph upon you know he has faithful stood by in all his deepest afflictions & still wished to bear a part in his persecutions stood up and in the most affecting language poured forth his complaints. . . .He . . . then showed what [Joseph Smith] had sacrificed for the Gospel’s sake in language it is impossible [to] describe. He then said he could bear no more and he would bear no more, but when ever anything occurred similar to what had taken place he would immediately leave the house. He then called a vote desiring to know who would do the same. Many of the congregation rose up, he then left the Stand and went out of the house. Many others followed. I staid a short time and heard Oliver Cowdery make a few remarks endeavoring to reconcile things a little. What he said was very good.

After Brother Cowdery spoke, Orson Pratt stood, and at that point “a great many more left the House. . . .” The situation was in such disarray that the sacrament was not administered, “the first time since the House of the Lord was built.”

On her way home, Mary passed by the Smith home, “not knowing whether [Joseph] would live till next morn. . . .”

It appears that Mary had known of Elder Pratt’s change of heart concerning Joseph Smith before the day’s meeting in the temple.

Parley had been the missionary who brought the restored gospel to the Fielding home in Charleton. He had returned to Canada and encouraged Joseph Fielding to serve a mission in England. And yet, something had happened between Mary and Parley which will likely never be known.

Mary Fielding Wrote to Her Sister Mercy Thompson in Canada

In her letter to Mercy, Mary wrote something very mysterious: “If I were with you I could tell you many things which I cannot tell you by writing. . . . I must now tell you a little more respecting Elder Pratt’s affair after his public testimony & denial of all charges brought against him.”

Mary explained that after the Sunday meetings, “A great number of Persons called upon me to get to know the real state of the case. I simply restated what passed and left them to judge for themselves.” Because Mary did not go into any detail, we might assume that Mercy was familiar

with what had occurred between Mary and Elder Pratt. Mary continued her letter to Mercy:

Every one seemed astonished. Elders Orson Pratt & Parish not less so than all the rest. They came with Pen and Paper and took down all the particulars from my mouth as they had heard so many reports and wanted to have the truth. Orson said he did not want to Look sin in his Brother more than in others. Since this [event on Sunday] Elder Parley has left all his Family and set off as he says for Missouri without ever calling upon Brother J.S. or acquainting the heads of the Church with his designs. I know not what the Lord will have to do with his Church before it will submit to be governed by the Head.

However, Mary's faith was firm and she wrote to Mercy, "Still know that notwithstanding all our defeats, this is the only Church of Christ."

Mary then closed that subject. She continued her lengthy letter by telling Mercy that she and "Sister Kimble. . . visited Brother Joseph yesterday and took supper with him. He seemed quite comfortable, is able to walk about and converse. . . . Those who love him of course rejoice abundantly. He says he shall yet stand in his place and accomplish the work God has given him to do. . . ."

Mary took this opportunity to show the prophet the letter she had received a few months earlier from her brother James. "He seemed much pleased . . and thinks he is a good prospect of their receiving the truth."

Mary continued by telling Mercy about church meetings on the 25th of June:

[Hyrum and Samuel Smith] conducted the communion service . . . after which they confirmed 12 persons Members of the Church. Bro. H. spoke in a great, pleasing manner and exhorted us as we had received Christ Jesus the Lord & so to walk in him. He asked us if we did not then feel as humble as little Children. He assured us that he for one did, and observed, I think, 'my heart is soft and I now feel as a little Child.'

He was then affected to tears and could not proceed but had to sit down for a short time to give vent to his feelings after which he again arose and led the congregation to excuse his weakness before he concluded. He seemed to be filled with the Spirit and power of God. He reminded me of some of the Nephite preachers of old when he assured us with great energy that from that hour the Church should begin to rise. May the Lord grant it Amen and Amen.

Mary included details in this letter to reassure Mercy of her own well-being. She mentioned that she had an offer to live in the home of Warren Parish, but she admitted to her sister that with almost twenty people living in his household, this did not sound like a prospect in which she was interested. "But if it's the will of God, he will bring it about. I must try to be content in any situation and do the best I can and serve God with all my heart."

Mary concluded her letter with thoughts of their family in England:

I feel more & more anxious about our dear Friends at home as the time draws nearer for the important trial whether they receive or reject the everlasting Gospel. James's Letter sometimes causes me to hope & sometimes to fear. Bro John according to our fears seems very non-believing, but all things are possible with God. I must now conclude & as I have had paper and Pen & Ink you must excuse bad writing. You know I require small accommodation. I remain your loving Sister, Mary.³⁶

Chapter 7 Endnotes Pages 104-116:

1. Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson 1807-1893 Autobiographical Sketch. Also, Mercy Thompson, "Recollections," *Juvenile Instructor* 27: 1892, page 398.

2. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 4.

3. Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson 1807-1893 Autobiographical Sketch. Also, Mercy Thompson, "Recollections," *Juvenile Instructor* 27: 1892, page 398.

4. Mercy Rachel Fielding Autobiography, currently held in the LDS Church History Library as MS 4580, but a copy is in my possession.

5. June 1837, Letter from Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson. Mary mentioned walking "home with Sister Kimble where I have been kindly treated ever since you left. She is a good Woman but very hard. She has but little work for me to do and I know not what I shall do nor where I shall go next."

6. This information came from a letter Joseph wrote to Mary in Kirtland, likely in the fall of 1837. He said, "It was well Sister Mary did not come; she would have been very uncomfortable." The context was that Joseph was strapped for funds, poverty was prevalent and Mary might have had difficulty finding work or a place to live since their siblings had rejected them and the Gospel message in which they believed.

7. *Mothers of the Prophets*, Leonard J. Arrington, Salt Lake City: 2001, pages 95-96.

8. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 4.

9. Quotes in this section relating to the missionaries' departure, unless otherwise stated, are from the *History of the Church*, Volume II, pages 491-492.

10. *History of the Church*, Volume II, page 492.

11. Pratt, page 143. Many years later, Heber C. Kimball made a reference to receiving his endowment in Kirtland. This event occurred shortly after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. See *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, page 91. *Journal History*, 29 December 1858, "The Lord said, when we received our endowments in Kirtland, that, 'after your testimony, cometh the testimony of judgement, pestilence, war, etc.'" The scripture reference appears to have come from section 43, but that was received in 1831, a year before Elder Kimball's baptism.

12. Joseph Fielding Diary, page 4.

13. *History of the Church*, Volume II, page 492.

14. *History of the Church*, Volume II, page 492.

15. The 2002 Student Manual of the Doctrine and Covenants, easily found online, tells details about Joseph seeing this vision. Eyewitness Phil Dibble recorded, "Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked,

smilingly, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am.’”

16. A digital copy of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants can be easily found online among The Joseph Smith Papers project at josephsmithpapers.org.

17. Life of Heber C. Kimball, by Orson F. Whitney, page 104. The accounts from Elder Kimball’s life have come from the first few chapters of this book.

18. This account of the vision in the night sky of 1827 is well-known from LDS Church history and comes here from the Life of Heber C. Kimball. I was surprised while transcribing an 1835 letter from James Fielding to his siblings in Toronto to read of a similar account which happened in Somerset County two years earlier. “On Sunday evening Oct 4 between 6 & 7 o’clock [1835] a regiment of horse soldiers was seen in the air all performing their evolutions as if in the field of battle; both the men and horses appeared in black. This phenomenon was witnessed at Chewton Mendips not far from Bath (I believe) by 30 or 50 persons who were filled with consternation.” I checked the date of October 4th from History of the Church. This date preceded Joseph Smith’s counsel to the Twelve that they move to Missouri, in my view not a comparable event to Moroni’s visit to Joseph Smith eight years earlier, but interesting, nonetheless.

19. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, Robin and Smith, Nauvoo, Illinois, 1840, by Robert B. Thompson, Preface, pages v-vi.

20. A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain, by Richard L. Evans, published by Deseret News Press, Salt Lake city, 1937, page 18. “Tuesday the 13th these brethren gave the parting hand, bid farewell to home, and without purse or scrip started for England. They were accompanied 12 miles, to Fairport, on Lake Erie, by Elders Brigham Young, John P. Greene, and Brother Levi Richards, and sisters [Vilate] Kimball, [Rhoda] Green, [Mary] Fielding and [Mercy and Brother R. B. Thompson,] who accompanied the mission to Buffalo and Brother Fitch Brigham to Utica, and others, and went on board a steamer for Buffalo, where they arrived next day.”

21. “Mission to England, or the First Foreign Mission of the Latter-day Saints,” *Times and Seasons*, Nauvoo, Illinois, 3, #20 (15 August 1842), pages 879-884. This is easily found online.

22. June 1837 Letter, Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson.

23. This letter was the second letter in the Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Collection, MS 2779. A later hand penned in “June 1837” at the top, as there was no date. The context of the letter indicates it was likely written the last week of June. The letter was written to Mercy Fielding Thompson in Canada by Mary Fielding in Kirtland.

24. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 11. Neither Heber or Joseph ever mentions the source of the funds, only that this was money owed Joseph and John Taylor was delivering it. Because the money seemed to be directed to Joseph and not the collective missionaries, I have assumed that this money came from the final sale of Joseph Fielding’s property in Charleton, which I dealt with in a footnote at the time of Joseph’s departure from Canada.

25. Letter dated 17 July 1837 from Mary Russell Kirtland to Isaac Russell in England. “After you left me we met with a disappointment we did not expect. In place of the money Mr. Charlton returned the notes. He would not take them without another endorser or mortgage on the land. I and Bro. Taylor went to Lorange (sic) and he refused giving any better security at present so we have the notes at present. I think there will be nothing done with them till you return. Bro. Taylor and Bro. Thompson tried to borrow the money could not.” This letter is part of the Isaac Russell Correspondence Collection held at BYU’s Special Collections, MSS 497.

26. The account of Joseph’s worries about money for his mission comes from the first letter in the Joseph Fielding Letters, 1837, preserved in the LDS Church History Library as MS D 2770 Folder 5. Further references to this issue and of the events in New York City are from the same letter and a following letter, either sent at the same time or five days later. The envelope was addressed to Miss Mary Fielding, Kirtland Mills, Geauga Co., Ohio.

27. Journal of Heber C. Kimball, page 11. Heber provided the information that they traveled via train from Albany to New York City, and that their detour to Massachusetts was only thirty miles.

28. A Century of Mormonism, page 18.

29. This was not Joseph Fielding's concern alone. It seems all the missionaries were counting on these funds. Joseph Smith wrote, in History of the Church, Volume II, page 494, "The brethren having been disappointed in not receiving funds from Canada, while at Buffalo, Elder Richards left the company at Albany, and in company with President Kimball visited his friends in Richmond, Massachusetts, where they obtained means sufficient to continue their journey. . . ."

30. The quip by Heber to Joseph came from a DUP biography of Hannah Greenwood by an unnamed author.

31. Elijah Fordham joined the LDS Church in 1834, marched with Zion's Camp, and was faithful to the Prophet Joseph. Elijah and his family crossed the plains in 1850 and Brother Fordham died in Utah in 1879.

32. June 1837 Letter, Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson.

33. The Life of John Taylor does not mention a trip by John to Kirtland in the summer of 1837. John was in Canada in August when Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and Thomas Marsh visited the mission. In Mary Fielding's June 1837 letter to Mercy, she writes that Parley was in Kirtland. The History of the Church doesn't say Parley was in Kirtland when the missionaries departed, so I have assumed that John Taylor remained in Canada and Parley P. Pratt returned to Kirtland just after the missionaries left. We know from Mary's letter that Parley spoke in the temple on June 18th.

34. June 1837 Letter, Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson.

35. History of the Church, Volume II, page 493.

36. June 1837 Letter, Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson.