

BYU STUDIES



MORMONISM  
IN THE  
BRITISH ISLES  
1837-1987

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Karl F. Batdorff  
Lyle L. Fletcher

Patricia Davis  
Jani Sue Muhlestein

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# Guest Editors' Introduction

Donald Q. Cannon and Larry C. Porter

The 150th anniversary of the Church in the British Isles was marked in 1987. On 19 July 1837, Elders Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, Joseph Fielding, Isaac Russell, John Goodson, and John Snider arrived in the British Isles on a mission prompted by an inspired statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

God revealed to me that something new must be done for the salvation of His Church. And on or about the first of June, 1837, Heber C. Kimball, one the Twelve, was set apart by the spirit of prophecy and revelation . . . to preside over a mission to England, to be the first foreign mission of the Church of Christ in the last days.<sup>1</sup>

The sesquicentennial of the opening of the British Mission has been celebrated in a variety of ways in a number of places. Brigham Young University sponsored a symposium in January in which four General Authorities and a number of members and scholars in various disciplines participated. Symposium participants presented papers on a wide range of topics. During the summer, particularly during July, several tour groups visited Church sites in the British Isles. The Mormon History Association held its annual meeting 5–13 July. The Church History and Doctrine Department of BYU held its annual symposium in the British Isles from 18–27 July. In addition, commemorative historical markers were dedicated at selected sites by Church dignitaries. On Sunday, 26 July 1987, six area conferences of the Church were held in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland with a combined congregation of approximately thirty thousand. President Ezra Taft Benson presided at the London area conference.

This is the first of two special issues of *Brigham Young University Studies* planned to preserve some of the spirit of that celebration by publishing papers delivered at various times during 1987. While most of the papers are from the BYU symposium held in January, some are from other meetings and symposia.

This first issue will feature articles on two general subjects: (1) studies or commentaries that give an overview or emphasize the coming

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Donald Q. Cannon is a professor of Church history and doctrine and associate dean of religious education at Brigham Young University. Larry C. Porter is a professor of Church history and doctrine and the director of the Church history area, Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center.

of the Church to Britain and the gathering of the British Saints and (2) studies that emphasize individuals. The articles in the second issue will treat (1) studies of the Church in English-speaking countries other than England and (2) studies or commentaries emphasizing the development of the Church as a religious entity in Great Britain.

Having been one of the direct participants in the first apostolic mission to England in 1837, and having served as the presiding officer of the mission until the return of members of the Twelve in 1840, Joseph Fielding reviewed the progress of the Church in the British Isles in an August 1841 letter to Elder Parley P. Pratt, and reflected:

When we first came to England there were seven of us, if I may call myself one, but now there are, I suppose, about 7,000. The little one has become a thousand, and the strong one shall soon become a great nation. What hath God wrought?<sup>2</sup>

Enjoying the perspective of time, the editors and writers of these two issues on the Church in Great Britain now have an opportunity to expand the ramifications of Joseph Fielding's pensive query.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946–50): 2:489.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Fielding to Parley P. Pratt, in *Millennial Star* 2 (August 1841): 53.

# A Declaration to the World

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brothers and sisters, it is my great honor and pleasure to open this symposium commemorating the 150th anniversary of the British Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I am one who believes in celebrations. I am one who believes in commemorating great events of the past. When we do so we bring to life, as it were, men and women of history who did significant things of which we need reminding. We all need to recognize that a tremendous price has been paid for the freedom we enjoy, the respect we enjoy, the comfort we enjoy as we live in this age of comparative ease and affluence.

The opening of the British Mission a century and a half ago was a declaration to the world: it was a declaration of a great millennial vision; it was an expression of tremendous faith; it was a demonstration of personal courage; and it was a statement of everlasting truth.

I do not intend to deal at length with the history of this event. There will be much of that given at this symposium and in many other meetings which will be held during the coming months. This celebration will reach its zenith on Sunday, 26 July, when five great conferences will be held simultaneously in the British Isles with members of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the First Quorum of the Seventy participating with Latter-day Saints of the United Kingdom.

I repeat, the opening of the British Mission in 1837 was a declaration of a millennial vision. The resurrected Lord had said to his beloved disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That was a tremendous charge given a handful of men who had neither means nor standing before the world to carry out this encompassing mandate. They gave their lives in doing all that they could.

John the Revelator in vision "saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

In these latter days, as Joseph Smith concluded his translation of the Book of Mormon, he arrived at the statement which has become part of the title page and which sets forth the book's purpose—"to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

In the revelation given 1 November 1831, which became section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said:

Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them. (D&C 1:1–2, 4–5)

This was a God-given mandate, a millennial mandate. It rested upon a handful of Latter-day Saints living in the farming communities of Kirtland and its environs in the 1830s. They had very little money. At tremendous sacrifice they had constructed a temple as "a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 109:8). With the dedication of that sacred edifice, the power of the adversary began to move through Kirtland, manifesting itself in a spirit of reckless speculation that diverted the minds of many from the things of God to the things of mammon. The United States at that time was gripped by this spirit of speculation which burst with catastrophic effects in the financial crash of 1837. In Kirtland, people turned against the Prophet Joseph Smith. There was bitterness, and there was greed. The Church was shaken, and a great sifting took place between the faithful and those whose eyes were set upon the things of the world. The problem was compounded by the fact that some members of the Church were in Ohio and others were in Missouri, separated by a distance of eight hundred miles and largely without communication.

Here were a people with a millennial vision and a responsibility that encompassed the entire world, but who were embroiled in difficulties sapping the very lifeblood of the Church. It was in these distressing times, on Sunday, 4 June 1837, that the Prophet Joseph Smith came to Heber C. Kimball, while Brother Kimball "was seated in front of the stand, above the sacrament table, on the Melchisedek side of the Temple,

in Kirtland, and whispering to [him], said, ‘Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me: Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my Gospel, and open the door of salvation to that nation.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

Imagine, if you will, one man, who at the time had very little of the goods of this world, telling another who had practically nothing, having just returned from a mission, that he was to go across the sea to open the work there. Wasn’t there enough to be done at home? They were on the frontier of the nation, and the entire membership of the Church probably did not exceed fifteen thousand people. But there was a vision in the hearts of these men. It was a millennial vision that the gospel was to be preached to every nation before the end should come. Some work had been done in Canada, but that was just across the lake. Now they were speaking of crossing the sea to go to the British Isles. One can understand Heber C. Kimball’s response. Feeling his weakness he said, “O, Lord, I am a man of stammering tongue, and altogether unfit for such a work; how can I go 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!”<sup>2</sup>

The call of Heber C. Kimball and his associates to cross the sea to Britain was a declaration by the Prophet Joseph of the great destiny of this restored work. As I have read of the condition of the Saints in Ohio and Missouri at that time, and of the smallness of their number, I have marveled at the breadth of their vision. From that time forth there has never been a dimming of that vision. Through the years that followed, regardless of drivings, persecution, poverty, oppression, and every other force the adversary could exercise against them, the work has grown and expanded until today we have 203 missions and are teaching the gospel in seventy-five sovereign nations and eighteen territories, colonies, and possessions.

Much as has been done, the end is not yet. We have done practically nothing in many areas of the world, but as the doors of the nations open the messengers of truth will go forward in fulfillment of that great millennial vision which was opened in the dark days of Ohio and Missouri with the call of seven men to go to the British Isles.

Their response to that call was a magnificent expression of faith. Said Brother Kimball at the time:

The idea of such a mission was almost more than I could bear up under, I was almost ready to sink under the burden which was placed upon me.

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 and endow me with every qualification that I needed; and although my family was dear to me, and I should have to leave them almost destitute, I felt that the cause of truth, the gospel of Christ, outweighed every other consideration.<sup>3</sup>

Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and Joseph Fielding responded with similar faith, and these four were joined in New York by John Goodson, Isaac Russell, and John Snyder, who came forward with comparable faith for that historic and significant undertaking.

Tuesday, 13 June, was the scheduled departure date for the four who were to leave Kirtland. One who looked in on the Kimball household that morning described the prayer that was uttered by the father who was leaving and who then,

like the patriarchs, and by virtue of his office, laid his hands upon [the heads of his children] individually, leaving a father's blessing upon them, and commending them to the care and protection of God, while he should be engaged in preaching the Gospel in a foreign land. While thus engaged his voice was almost lost in the sobs of those around, who tried in vain to suppress them. The idea of being separated from their protector and father for so long a time was indeed painful. He proceeded, but his heart was too much affected to do so regularly. His emotions were great, and he was obliged to stop at intervals, while the big tears rolled down his cheeks.<sup>4</sup>

Faith? Faith was all they had—faith and courage. They had no money. One of the brethren gave the coatless Heber a coat. One of the women gave him five dollars, with which he paid for passage for himself and Orson Hyde to Buffalo. En route to New York City, they went by way of Massachusetts and collected forty dollars from a brother of Willard Richards.

They met their associates in New York, and on Sunday, 25 June, noted that they fasted, prayed, administered the sacrament, and pleaded with the Lord for direction. Somehow they secured eighteen dollars each for passage to Liverpool. At 10:00 A.M. on 1 July, the packet ship *Garrick* of nine hundred tons drew anchor and hoisted sails, and they started across the sea.

What an expression of faith, and what a demonstration of courage! That courage carried with it a spirit of enthusiasm. After eighteen days and eighteen hours on the water, to cover a distance I flew on a Concorde in three hours and twenty minutes, the ship pulled into the Mersey River beside the dock at Liverpool. A small boat came alongside the larger ship. They boarded this, and when they were within six or seven feet of the dock Heber jumped to shore. They spent a few days in Liverpool seeking direction from the Lord, and then felt the whispering of the Spirit directing them to go thirty-one miles to the north to the town of Preston. There they found a city in a state of excitement over elections for members of Parliament. Queen Victoria had ascended the throne three days earlier and had called for a national election.

As they came up the street in Preston, a banner unfurled before them bearing the words "Truth will Prevail." This they adopted as the motto of their mission.

Their work immediately became a declaration of everlasting truth. As you know, they preached first in Vauxhall Chapel, whose minister was a brother of Joseph Fielding of their own group. That and their subsequent preachings led to the baptism of nine souls in the River Ribble the following Sunday.

From that July day in 1837, their message of truth has been repeated by thousands of missionaries who have followed them, and it has come to lodge in the hearts of hundreds of thousands who have accepted the gospel in the British Isles.

I am one of those missionaries who followed them. My sacrifice was not as great. I fear my faith was not as strong. Certainly my journey was not as tedious as was theirs. I traveled by train in 1933 from Salt Lake City to New York, and then took ship from New York to Plymouth, England. There were three of us in our group. Two stayed in London, and somehow, in the providence of the Lord, I, like Heber C. Kimball and his associates ninety-six years earlier, was sent to Preston. That was my first assignment and my first field of labor. I became as familiar with the places they knew and the streets they walked as they had been nearly a century earlier. My companion and I walked up and down the same road where they had seen that banner, "Truth will Prevail." In the evening of the day that I arrived in Preston, my companion, who was the district president, said we would go down to the marketplace and hold a street meeting. There, in the place which was familiar to Heber C. Kimball and his associates, Elder Bramwell and I raised our voices in a hymn, offered prayer, and preached the same gospel to a gathering crowd as those first missionaries had preached.

The house on Wilfred Street, where they stayed and had a terrible experience with evil spirits, was familiar to me. Years later, I took President Spencer W. Kimball there so that he might see where his grandfather had that terrifying experience. Each day as my companion and I walked along Manchester Road to and from our "digs," we passed Vauxhall Chapel again and again, as did those first missionaries when they preached within its walls the day after they arrived in Preston. I was there some years later when a bulldozer was knocking the old building down to make way for a housing project. I picked up a brick from that chapel, which I still have. The River Ribble with its old tram bridge, where the first baptisms were performed while hundreds of people looked on, was familiar to me. I took President and Sister Kimball to this site some years ago and took their picture there. That picture was used by them on their Christmas card that year.

Somehow I feel especially fortunate now to have been sent to Preston as my initial assignment. Not only did I labor there, but I labored in the surrounding towns where those first missionaries taught the gospel. I was not as effective as were they. When they first

arrived, there evidently was little or no prejudice against them. When I arrived, it seemed that everyone was prejudiced against us. A short time before I arrived, two missionaries unfortunately had been sent home because of violation of mission rules. The people in the city knew of their behavior, and this aggravated their antagonism toward us. I was not well when I arrived. Those first few weeks, because of illness and the opposition which we felt, I was discouraged. I wrote a letter home to my good father and said that I felt I was wasting my time and his money. He was my father and my stake president, and he was a wise and inspired man. He wrote a very short letter to me which said, "Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion, forget yourself and go to work." Earlier that morning in our scripture class my companion and I had read these words of the Lord: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35).

Those words of the Master, followed by my father's letter with his counsel to forget myself and go to work, went into my very being. With my father's letter in hand, I went into our bedroom in the house at 15 Wadham Road, where we lived, and got on my knees and made a pledge with the Lord. I covenanted that I would try to forget myself and lose myself in his service.

That July day in 1933 was my day of decision. I do not say it egotistically. I say it humbly and with gratitude. A new light came into my life and a new joy into my heart. The fog of England seemed to lift, and I saw the sunlight. I had a rich and wonderful mission experience, for which I shall ever be grateful, laboring in Preston where the work began and in other places where it had moved forward, including the great city of London, where I served the larger part of my mission.

As I stand before you today, my heart is filled with gratitude. I feel humble and grateful. I feel thankful for the events of 1837, for the call by the Prophet Joseph to those early missionaries to go to Britain in declaration of a great millennial vision, in expression of a tremendous faith, in demonstration of personal courage, with a statement of everlasting truth. I am profoundly grateful that I had the privilege and opportunity of walking in their footsteps, and that while laboring on the ground which they hallowed by their efforts there came into my heart a great consuming love for this work of God and for his Beloved Son, the Redeemer of the world, in whose name we serve.

God be thanked for this glorious gospel of his Beloved Son, restored to earth in this the dispensation of the fullness of times.

God be thanked for the Prophet Joseph, through whom that restoration came, and for the revelation given and received only seven years after the founding of the Church to take the gospel across the sea to the Isles of Britain.

God be thanked for the faith of those who, with neither purse nor scrip, sailed the ocean and began the work which has gone forward without interruption now for a century and a half. From there the work spread to Europe, and now to much of the world.

The infusion of the blood of Britain into the weakened body of the Church in 1837 and in the years that followed gave needed strength. From those isles came thousands of converts, many with great skills which became useful in building Nauvoo and, later, the communities of these western valleys. I never look upon the magnificent Salt Lake Temple and Tabernacle, and the other Utah temples, the Lion and Beehive Houses, and various other Church structures that I do not marvel at their handiwork. Hundreds died on the journey to these mountain valleys. But they and those who lived to settle here have left a residual of faith consonant with that carried by the small group who in 1837 crossed the sea and cast the gospel net in England.

In this season of commemoration, may we remember them and honor them for that which they undertook in faith and which has become an empire of eternal truth, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

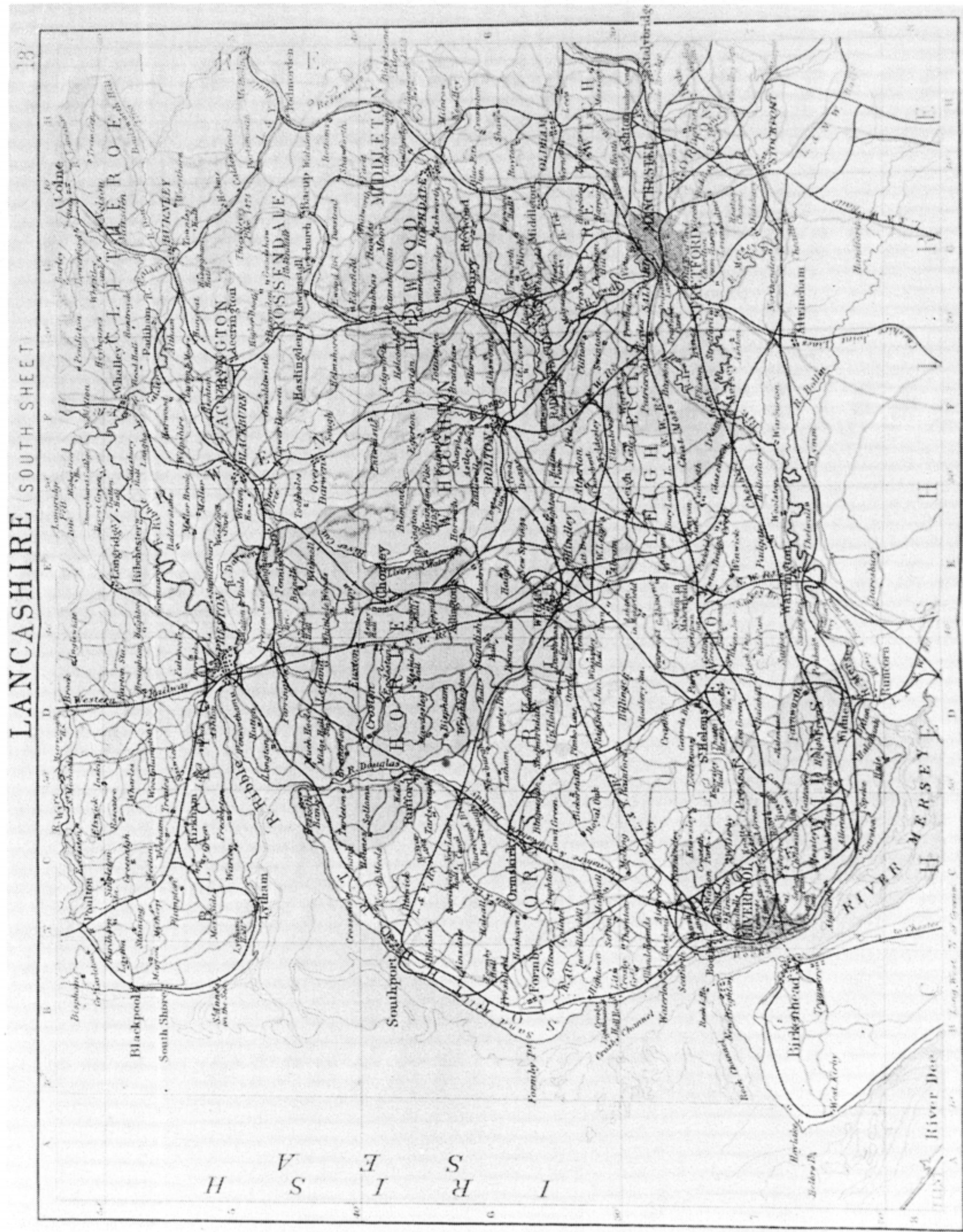
#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946–50): 2:490.

<sup>2</sup>Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945), 104.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 108–9.



A map of Lancashire from *Philip's Handy Atlas of the Counties of England*  
(London: George Philip and Son, 1887), map 18b.

# The British Contribution to the Restored Gospel

Bishop Robert D. Hales

The celebration of 150 years of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles provides an opportunity to recognize the contribution of the English to the laying of the foundation for the restoration of the gospel in the last days and the divine intervention in its history.

From that damp and foggy island in Western Europe sprang a tenacity for truth and freedom whose influence has been felt around the world. The influence of modern English is remarkable. The world-wide spread of the language has no precedent. Spanish and French, Arabic and Turkish, Latin and Greek have served their turns as international languages, but none has come near to rivaling English. Today, 330 million people throughout the world speak it as a mother tongue. Add to this those who use English as a second language, and you approach one billion English speakers. It is spoken in more countries than any other language. It is the language of international shipping and air travel, of science and diplomacy. How has this happened? Partly through the power of Britain in the nineteenth century and of America in the twentieth.

But who are the English and what is the source of their influence? The English language came before the country was called England. It was the name given to the dialect spoken by the Angles and Saxons in Britain during the fifth century A.D. By the eleventh century, the English were comprised of Celtic, Scandinavian, and Norman–French elements also. Just as in America today, this mixing of blood brought out unique qualities in the people.

The English have always been devout Christians. It has not always rested comfortably upon them. The conflicts between state and church hold center stage throughout English history but appear to have been essential in the preparation of an independent and free people. Christianity was introduced into Britain from the East in the second century and was well established by the fourth century. In the beginning,

Christianity flourished in Britain because of a fruitful partnership between the state and Church. It was distinct and had no origins in Rome or associations with the universal organization of the Papacy. An attempt by Augustine in 597 to bring the renegade English into the Catholic fold failed to have the desired effect. The debate on the Roman and English views of Christianity persisted across the centuries. The poet William Blake suggested divine origins for the unique faith developed in England:

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?<sup>1</sup>

As the power of the English church grew, so did the stature of the English kings who nurtured and enriched it. It is not surprising, therefore, that the legend of King Arthur (ca. 539) as a defender of Christian virtue came from this period. And King Richard (ca. 1189) devoted his reign to fighting the Crusades.

But human nature being what it is, the power invested in one man—the king—was sooner or later bound to cause conflict between church and state. The first significant signs came in the reign of Henry II (ca. 1153). In a struggle to exercise control of the church, Henry had Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, killed. Henry's son John had to face bitter opposition from the church. This, combined with the hostility of his barons, brought him down. In June 1215 at Runnymede, John was forced to agree to the Magna Carta. There, he signed away many of the monarch's powers.

Achieving the delicate balance between church and state gave birth to English common law, which is the bedrock of the British constitution and also the basis of the American constitution. Under this system both sovereign and subject were bound by common law, and the liberties of Englishmen were determined, not by any enactment of state, but by an immemorial, slow-growing custom declared by juries of free men. (It is interesting to note that the phrase "time immemorial" has its origins from this period in the thirteenth century.) This was the beginning of a transformation in government. By 1265, Henry III had set up England's first parliament—one of the greatest gifts that Britain has given the world. Early in the fourteenth century Parliament developed into two houses, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, which form of government was adopted by the American founding fathers as the Senate and House of Representatives.

Changes in the relationship between church and state continued on apace. Fanned by reformers such as John Wycliff (who translated the Bible into English) and William Tyndale (who translated and printed the

New Testament), reading of the Bible by ordinary people became a reality and increased the pressure for reformation. When Henry VIII (ca. 1520) broke his country's links with the Roman Catholic Church in order to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, the English Reformation was in full swing and abruptly altered the whole course of English history.

In 1603, a new dynasty, the House of Stuart from Scotland, came to the throne. They misunderstood the beliefs of the English and underestimated the power of parliament. Even the efforts of James I (ca. 1604) to bring about national unity by having Puritan ministers and Anglican bishops make a new translation of the Bible backfired. The book was a great success and has endured as the most widely read Bible. It is the version used to this day by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But its immediate impact was to encourage individual conscience, and that brought the Puritans into disfavor with King James. He told them that unless they conformed to the Church of England, he would "harry them out of this land."<sup>2</sup> Finally, on 16 September 1620, the *Mayflower* sailed out from Plymouth and with her 101 passengers set course for a new life in a new land.

By 1649 the puritanical approach to Christianity had brought the church and parliament into direct opposition with the crown. The result was civil war, the execution of Charles I, and a government led by a Puritan, Oliver Cromwell. The very legal systems created by the medieval kings had signed the death warrant of absolute monarchy.

Although the monarchy was eventually restored with limited powers, parliament held the upper hand and democracy was born. The age of prosperity that followed expressed itself in the expanding British Empire. The Puritans who stayed at home were not all political pioneers; they also excelled in the arts (John Milton), the sciences (Isaac Newton), and engineering (James Watt). Their independence of thought and action gave birth to the industrial revolution. They prepared for that takeoff into the modern industrial world which England was the first country to experience.

Just as George III's government was starting to encourage settlement in the empire, Britain lost its oldest overseas settlements. Thirteen North American colonies broke away to declare their independence in 1776. Governing a worldwide empire without representation proved impossible. By the middle of the twentieth century, most of Britain's possessions had achieved similar independence. The United States formally embodied the principles of the Declaration of Independence in its constitution. This historic document was dedicated to the principles that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." These words were written by

Thomas Jefferson, a lawyer schooled in English law. The nation so founded was thus based on English concepts of justice, law, and freedom—England's legacy to the New World.

President Brigham Young said on one occasion:

The King of Great Britain . . . might also have been led to these aggressive acts, for aught we know, to bring to pass the purpose of God, in thus establishing a new government upon a principle of greater freedom, a basis of self-government allowing the free exercise of religious worship.<sup>3</sup>

We now recognize the great and significant contribution the English-speaking peoples of the world have made in the restoration of true Christianity to the earth, motivated by their indomitable pursuit for truth and religious liberty.

Joseph Smith, the architect of the Restoration, was born of British stock, descended on the paternal side from Robert Smith, who came from England to America in 1638, and on the maternal side from John Mack, an immigrant from Scotland to America in 1680. If ever a man was in the right place at the right time with the right credentials it was the Prophet Joseph Smith. Almost a thousand years of searching for the truth lay in his heritage.

Despite difficult financial times in Kirtland, the Prophet, through revelation, called the first missionaries to England. The missionaries left their Kirtland homes on 13 June 1837 and landed in Liverpool on 19 July. Thus commenced the restoration of the true gospel in the British Isles, and coincidentally in the same year that Victoria came to the throne.

In this year of 1987, we celebrate 150 years of missionary labors among those great people. As William G. Hartley has written:

English convert immigrants became part of a large infusion that gave Mormonism in America vitally needed new blood. By early 1841 . . . at least 1,000 English LDS converts had moved to America. By 1846, when Nauvoo was evacuated, more than 3,000 English Saints had settled there. By the turn of the century approximately 50,000 English Mormons had immigrated to the States. . . . Prophecies had received literal fulfillment. The Lord had told Joseph Smith to look to England for help for the church's problems, and the help came.<sup>4</sup>

Among those early stalwart converts from this land were such men as John Taylor (third President of the Church), George Q. Cannon and John R. Winder (Counselors in the First Presidency), George Teasdale (Apostle), and B. H. Roberts (member of the First Quorum of the Seventy).

In England the missionaries immediately found that many souls were ready and waiting for their message. England in the mid-nineteenth century was at the zenith of the Industrial Revolution. Those most attracted by the missionary message were the casualties of social change, the poor, the unemployed, and the illiterate. The conditions that prevailed

among such people are well depicted in the novels of the time, such as Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* and *David Copperfield*. Dickens's vivid pictures of the life of the poor, huddled into airless factories, working dark and dreary mines, and living in city slums, are explanation enough of why many looked for relief in a new cause and a new country. The traditional reasons that promoted immigration of non-Mormons also promoted immigration of Latter-day Saint converts.

Brigham Young and Willard Richards were certainly no strangers to poverty and privation. Brigham Young, so ill himself he could hardly walk, had left his sick wife and children without proper food and medical attention to go on his mission to England in 1840. But some of the conditions in England were still a shock. In a joint letter written to Joseph Smith and the other members of the First Presidency, Elder Young and Elder Richards called conditions

a mighty revolution, in the affairs of the common people. . . . The people have enough to do, to keep from dying with hunger without taking much thought for the improvement of the mind. Many of the people cannot read, a great many cannot write. . . . There [are] thousands & tens of thousands who cannot get one days work in a month, or six months, so they continue to labor 12 hours in a day for almost nothing rather than starve at once. Their miserable pittance is mostly oatmeal & water boiled together, & they would be quite content if they could get enough of that.<sup>5</sup>

But life for the new converts in the "promised land" was still difficult. Many of those early converts gathered at Nauvoo. Though the city eventually prospered, the first immigrants were faced with conditions equally trying as those they had left:

One notable characteristic of Nauvooers was their poverty. There was too little money available for investment, industry, or trade, so the economy was weak. Illinois, including Nauvoo, suffered the lingering after-effects of the devastating national depression of 1837. As Joseph Smith phrased it when inviting Saints to gather to the city: "Let all that will, come and partake of the poverty of Nauvoo freely."<sup>6</sup>

Moving across the Atlantic, being driven from one Mormon settlement to another, and then crossing the plains to the Great Basin entailed enormous hardship. They had not expected ridicule and persecution. It seemed outrageous to these immigrant converts to be treated with prejudice in a country so proud of its declared religious tolerance. Many lost property, money, family, friends, and also testimony. Nevertheless, the constant influx of enthusiastic new converts from Britain, arriving by the thousands, provided strength and encouragement to the Church.

But the British character has stoic qualities developed through centuries of similar privations in temporal and spiritual affairs. The English Catholics suffered terrible persecution under Protestant kings,

and the Protestants suffered in like manner under Catholic monarchs. Converts to Mormonism were also tested by the refiner's fire, from which they emerged dedicated Saints.

Typical of the converts of that time was the Howells family of Wales. William Howells, his wife, Martha, then four months pregnant, their daughter Ann, their seven-year-old son William, and two-year-old son Reese began their journey to Zion on 4 March 1851. In spite of his longing to join the main body of the Saints in Salt Lake City, William Howells was saddened at the prospect of turning his back on his beloved Wales, "shuddering at the thought of having his death bed surrounded by strangers, and his grave in a foreign land."<sup>7</sup>

Despite these feelings, the Howellses embarked on a voyage crossing the Atlantic, a voyage during which the Mormon immigrants baptized twenty-one fellow shipmates, using a platform thrown overboard and lowered into the sea. There was no reason to expect anything but good fortune in crossing the plains, but before they could complete the journey William Howells was stricken with sickness. His frail constitution was not able to throw off the illness, and he died 21 November 1851, age thirty-five. Martha was left with the enormous task of getting herself, her babe-in-arms, and her three other children a further fifteen hundred miles. She was forced to sell what few possessions she had to raise money for the journey. During the wagon trek toward Utah, Martha suffered yet another personal tragedy—the death of nine-year-old William. He had fallen asleep beneath a wagon wheel and was crushed when the wagon started again. Martha, a true stalwart in every sense of the word, continued faithful to her conviction of the truthfulness of Mormonism right up to her death nearly thirty years later in 1879. After ten years of harsh existence in Utah, she made a one-year visit to Wales where she received her share of her father's estate.<sup>8</sup>

Why did the Mormons arouse so much hostility? America was founded by devout Christians looking for a place to avoid persecution. Religious tolerance was incorporated into the Bill of Rights and later strengthened by its inclusion into individual state constitutions. Yet unlike other minority religions, the Latter-day Saints attracted animosity everywhere they went. At one point, at the height of their suffering in Kirtland, Ohio, they were persuaded to write their own "Declaration of Belief Regarding Governments." This is contained in section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In giving the background for this declaration, Joseph Smith wrote:

The reason for the article on "Government and Law in general" is explained in the fact that the Latter-day Saints had been accused by their bitter enemies, both in Missouri and in other places, as being opposed to law and order. They had been portrayed as setting up laws in conflict with the laws

of the country. This bitterness went so far that an accusation was brought against them, on one occasion in a Missouri court, of disloyalty because they believed that at some future time the Lord would set up his own kingdom which would supersede the government of the United States, and so believing that the time would come when such a kingdom would be established, they were disloyal to the United States. Every pretext that could be imagined against the Saints to try and show them disloyal and rebellious against established government, was brought into use.<sup>9</sup>

And so we see that the Mormon experience is just a continuation of the age old supposed conflict between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of heaven. It is hard for man to differentiate the struggle to save his eternal soul from the struggle to survive in the temporal world.

The “Declaration of Belief” suggests there need not be a conflict: “We believe that religion is instituted of God” (D&C 134:4) and “governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man” (D&C 134:1). “We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government” (D&C 134:9). The Church, therefore, holds to the view of separation of church and state: no interference of church authority in political matters and the freedom of the individual to pursue his political opinions. “We do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion” (D&C 134:4). However, “to the laws all men owe respect and deference, as without them peace and harmony would be supplanted by anarchy and terror” (D&C 134:6). From an eternal perspective, it must be realized that although it is not appropriate for the Church to aspire for political supremacy, the Saints are looking forward to the time when he “whose right it is to reign” (D&C 58:22), even the Lord Jesus Christ, will rule the earth. In the meantime, they are to “be subject to the powers that be” (D&C 58:22).

Today this declaration helps the Church retain its presence in a restricted political climate and gain entry into countries for proselyting that might otherwise be denied. We as a Church and people have come so far in our understanding, our freedoms, our religious liberty; and our standing in the world today is influenced by our English heritage. In this memorial year, we express our gratitude for it.

In conclusion, as part of giving my testimony of the significance of the missionary work in England and the faithful English immigrants who joined the Church after reaching America, I would like to give you a few stories from my own family genealogical history. On both the mothers’ and fathers’ sides of Sister Hales’s family and my own, all of our family lines lead back to England.

Here are some typical stories from our ancestors:

## PILGRIM/PIONEER HERITAGE

John Crandall came to America from England in 1634 and helped to settle Rhode Island. Seven generations later, David Crandall was born. In 1833 he was the first of the Crandalls to join the Church, when two missionaries came to his home. The missionary enthusiasm for the gospel was so great that the Presbyterian and Baptist ministers gave the Latter-day Saint missionaries an opportunity to speak in their assemblies, resulting in a number of baptisms. In 1835 the David Crandall family moved to Kirtland. From there, they moved to Pike County, Missouri; Quincy, Illinois; La Harpe, Illinois; and finally Council Bluffs, Iowa. In 1850 many of his children traveled on to Salt Lake City.

Joseph Holbrook's grandfather and two brothers came from England to Plymouth Colony as Pilgrims. They settled in Massachusetts. Joseph's father died when Joseph was only seven years old. It was his father's dying wish that Joseph go to live with his grandfather in Massachusetts in order to have an opportunity to go to school. Joseph's grandfather taught him much. He was a moral man. He never indulged in any kind of vice, went to meetings on the Sabbath, believed in fulfillment of prophecy, prayed with his family, asked blessings at meals, and did not allow profanity. This set the background for what was to happen in the life of Joseph Holbrook.

Joseph was ready to receive the gospel when the elders preached in a town where he was living. He asked them where he could get a copy of the Book of Mormon. They did not know. Joseph told the two young men that he would walk a distance of fifty miles in order to obtain a copy if only they could direct him there. They said they could not tell him where he could find a copy. Joseph finally obtained a copy from his cousin. In two days and three nights he read the book through. Facing opposition from many friends and family members, he could not deny the truthfulness of the gospel, and he and his wife were baptized. They later crossed the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley.

## ENGLISH MISSIONARY

The Porter family originally immigrated to the United States in the 1700s. Nathan Tanner Porter was born in Vermont in 1820. His family moved several times, settling in Ohio in 1828. While there, they joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1832 they joined the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri. They were among those driven by mob violence from their possessions in the fall of 1833.

Nathan passed through the trying ordeals of the times, ending with the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri and their settlement in Illinois.

He was serving a mission in the Eastern States when the report of the Carthage Jail horror reached him. Along with other family members, Nathan left his possessions in Nauvoo and traveled west, reaching the shores of the Great Salt Lake in October 1847. He helped his father cultivate a small piece of land, built a home, married, and shared with his sweetheart the toils and hardships incident to the times.

Four years later he was called to serve a mission at the Rock of Gibraltar. He once more crossed the plains with mule and horse teams, traveled to New York, then sailed to Europe. The government did not allow him to stay in Gibraltar, so he served four and a half years on his mission in England, returning in 1856. Nathan crossed the Atlantic in the company of three hundred Saints and once more traversed the plains, leaving on 10 August 1856. His company reached the Platte on 1 November. They met many experiences of suffering and death and were finally rescued by men and teams from Salt Lake, bringing much needed supplies and aid. The handcart pioneers were now conveyed the remainder of the way in wagons, as comfortably as circumstances would permit. Nathan was reunited with his family in the Salt Lake Valley on 15 December 1856. He lived to serve two more missions in the United States.

#### ENGLISH IMMIGRANTS

Henry William Hales was born 7 August 1829, in Rainham, Kent, England. In 1832 his father and family immigrated to Canada. They settled in Toronto where they accepted the gospel of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They traveled from Toronto to Kirtland and on to Far West. They experienced all of the persecutions of the time. It was at Far West that Henry William Hales first saw the Prophet Joseph Smith as he was betrayed into the hands of a mob. He heard Joseph Smith sentenced to be shot without having the opportunity for a hearing.

They were expelled from Missouri with the rest of the Saints and went to Quincy, Illinois, remaining there until 1841 when they moved to Nauvoo. It was there they heard the Prophet Joseph say, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. . . . and it shall yet be said of me—he was murdered in cold blood" (D&C 135:4). Henry saw Joseph and Hyrum in their coffins. He knew they were men of God.

Henry William Hales moved west to the Salt Lake Valley in the spring of 1851. There he experienced Indian trouble, the grasshopper war, shortages of commodities (especially flour), differences between the U.S. government and the people of Utah, floods, and finally peace and freedom.

Another example was Jennette Bleasdale, born in 1826 in Lancashire, England. Her parents were proud and happy with this new little baby girl. They wanted for her the very best that could be had, but times were hard, food and money were scarce, and the Bleasdales were very poor. For nine years the family struggled to remain together, but now there were three children and the expenses were too high. One of the family must leave and work elsewhere to relieve the burden. It was decided that Jennette should go. Although she was only nine years of age, she was very mature in her ability to work and to take responsibility. It was hard to leave her family and go to the strange farm to live. Jennette didn't feel quite so grown-up or mature when saying good-bye, but she realized her responsibilities and accepted them. She worked hard, often getting up in the middle of the night to start the washing or to feed the pigs.

When Jennette was ten years old, the Mormon missionaries visited her family. They brought with them not only a new gospel but also hopes for a new and better life in America. With their conversion to the Church, the Bleasdales, along with others, began making plans to emigrate to America. After raising all the money he could by selling his possessions, Jennette's father found that he lacked enough money for all of them to emigrate. Someone would have to remain behind. Again, it was decided that Jennette would remain in England, and this time it was with real heartbreak that she waved good-bye to her loved ones.

For three years Jennette lived with an uncle, working and saving to buy her passage. Her uncle owned a mill which he sold in order to obtain enough money for their passage. After giving Jennette enough money for her passage, he started to town to buy his own but was robbed of all his money. Jennette was very despondent at the thought of leaving her relatives behind and traveling to America alone, but she was so homesick for her family that she decided to come anyway. On her thirteenth birthday, three years after her parents had come, she started for America. The voyage was difficult and lonely for the thirteen-year-old girl. Water was rationed out to each passenger, and young Jennette, being very seasick, used nearly all of her rations in the first few weeks of the trip. Her scanty remaining portion of water couldn't be stretched out very far, and she nearly died for want of water. After nine long, hard weeks, the vessel at last arrived in New Orleans instead of New York as planned. It had been blown off its course during severe storms at sea.

In New Orleans she located an uncle who had come to America earlier. It was comforting to the lonely girl to see a familiar face and to be warmly received into his home. She was disappointed, however, to learn that he had not heard from her parents or even knew that they had left England. So, restless and homesick, she started out alone once more. The trip up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo seemed very slow to the

anxious Jennette. The boat was old and sluggish, and at times the passengers were required to walk part of the way. The days dragged by for Jennette, whose thoughts raced ahead to the arrival in Nauvoo, the reunion with her family, and the hopes and dreams of a new life with the people of her faith in this promised land.

At last came the long awaited day of arrival at Nauvoo, but Jennette was to be disappointed once more. Her family had not yet arrived. Disappointments and discouragements could not be kept for long, however, for the Saints were a busy, dedicated, and happy people. Jennette soon found work at the home of Joseph Young, the brother to Brigham Young. Out of her earnings of seventy-five cents a week, she managed to save enough to buy a cow and a calf for her mother.

Months later her parents did arrive in Nauvoo, and there was a joyous reunion. They had been working in New York, trying to save enough money for the trip to Nauvoo. The family was soon to be separated again, however, for her parents left Nauvoo with the intention of settling in Iowa and working for the Poole family. Jennette decided to remain with Brother Young and to continue to work. She journeyed with the Youngs to Winter Quarters when she received word that her parents wanted her to come to Iowa. Although thirty miles from where her folks were, she started back, working her way and often walking along by the wagon which carried her trunks and belongings. After a month's journey, she arrived at the Poole farm in Iowa.

This was a very happy time for young Jennette. She was reunited with her family; they were all well, strong, and happy; and there was plenty of food and clothing for all. It was here that Jennette met young John Rawlston Poole. After a year elapsed they were married. John was converted to the Church and disowned by his father. This was a trying time for the young couple, and after their baby girl was born about one year later, they made preparations to leave for Winter Quarters and there join the Saints in their trek to Utah. Joseph Young was their leader, and with a cow and a team of oxen they started on their journey across the plains.

The trip to Salt Lake was long and hard, full of suffering and sorrow. Cholera raged through the camp, taking as victim their baby girl. She was buried on the plains—and they went on. John Rawlston also contracted the disease but was healed through a blessing given by Joseph Young. On the last leg of their journey the Indians were so plentiful that they couldn't build a fire, and the nights were long, fearful, and black. One of their oxen died, but they were able to finish their journey by using the cow in its place.

They were unable to remain in Salt Lake long, for there were many new frontiers to settle. So Jennette and John Rawlston packed their belongings and set out for Centerville in Northern Utah. This country

was so sparsely populated that Indians roamed it freely. For Jennette, who had faced all the hardships and suffering of pioneer life, this was just another problem to be accepted and managed as well as possible. She was responsible for providing a home for her husband and family, and this she intended to do.

These stories of pilgrims, converts, pioneers, child immigrants, and pioneer missionaries show the devotion, sacrifice, and dedication of our forebears. Is anything less required of us to meet today's challenges and endure to the end?

May we give thanks for our English heritage and live lives worthy of our English tradition of the law of consecration is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>John Sampson, ed., *The Poetical Works of William Blake* (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), 370.

<sup>2</sup>David Harris Willson and Stuart E. Prall, *A History of England*, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), 276.

<sup>3</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 2:170.

<sup>4</sup>William G. Hartley, *Kindred Saints: The Mormon Immigrant Heritage of Alvin and Katheryne Christensen* (Salt Lake City: Eden Hill, 1982), 13.

<sup>5</sup>Ronald W. Walker, ed., "The Willard Richards and Brigham Young 5 September 1840 Letter from England to Nauvoo," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Spring 1978): 469, 471.

<sup>6</sup>Hartley, *Kindred Saints*, 20.

<sup>7</sup>Donald Q. Cannon and David J. Whittaker, eds., *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons* (Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1985), 73.

<sup>8</sup>Abridged from *Supporting Saints*.

<sup>9</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), 2:30–31.

# Cradling Mormonism: The Rise of the Gospel in Early Victorian England

Ronald W. Walker

“The Gospel is spreading,” jubilantly wrote the Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball from England in 1840, and “the devils are roaring.”<sup>1</sup> Elder Kimball, along with six missionary associates, first landed in England from America in July 1837. Their proselyting efforts produced what seemed to them a remarkable success. In less than a year, they added approximately 1,500 to the handful of members they had found in the British Isles.<sup>2</sup>

A second wave of Mormon missionaries led by Brigham Young and the Church’s Quorum of Twelve Apostles disembarked in 1840. Their efforts were even more productive. Another seven or eight thousand souls were quickly joined to British Mormonism, and by the end of the decade the Church was claiming fifty thousand English conversions.<sup>3</sup>

While such a harvest made Mormonism only a minor British sect, to the fledgling Utah Church these additions were of major importance. A visitor strolling down a Salt Lake street in 1870 would have found the clipped British accent rivaling the flat-toned Yankee drawl. A third of the inhabitants of Salt Lake County were British born.<sup>4</sup>

Why had Victoria’s subjects found this imported religion from America so compelling? The answer lay partly with the cradling social conditions of the time. Too, the reason for Mormon success was the result of the qualities of the religion itself. Mormonism as it was first preached in Great Britain was a youthful and vibrant faith that spoke in the British industrial and preindustrial vernacular. Its message fit perfectly (some would say providentially) with the social and religious upheaval of the time.

When the Mormon Apostles first landed, the winds of change seemed to be blowing from every direction. The English population had

doubled since the beginning of the century. The Industrial Revolution in turn uprooted the nation's countryside, and by 1851 England became the first large, modern state with one-half of its population living within cities. The results of the demographic and industrial revolutions were immense. The Lord Chancellor might still sit upon a symbolic woolsack, but the nation's wealth increasingly centered in the new mill towns of the Midlands and north. There, in the congested squalor of his new environment, the English laborer found the certainties of his old life-style were lost. No longer was his behavior reinforced by the scrutiny of village acquaintances. As a result, the mill owner and banker began to challenge the squire and parson as arbiters of the laborer's conduct and convention.

There appeared new patterns with every turn of the kaleidoscope. George Stephenson's Stockton and Darlington Railroad, Sir Robert Peel's London Metropolitan Police, Thomas Attwood's Birmingham Political Union, Edwin Chadwick's Sanitary Commission, and Robert Owen's Consolidated Trades Union were each symbols in their own way of early nineteenth-century transition. Together they spoke of revolutions in transportation, public safety, pressure politics, public health, and trade unionism that would continue to sweep the nation throughout the century and beyond.

Thus at the moment Mormon missionaries began their proselyting tours, England was experiencing the uncertainty of change and innovation. The Great Parliamentary Reform of 1832 had only whetted the reforming appetites of the middle and laboring classes. The Anti-Corn Law agitation of John Bright and Richard Cobden sought to deliver a more substantial blow to the agrarian aristocracy, while the working-class Chartists—diffuse, unstable, and loosely led by the mercurial Feargus O'Connor—sought a genuine English democracy. These two great reform movements, joined by at least another dozen other agitations, convulsed England with crusades, pamphlets, circuit riding reformers, mass meetings, and hortatory journals.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the spirit of reform was furthered in the late 1830s and early 1840s by unseasonable weather and a sputtering national economy. Genuine distress demanded amelioration.

In response Parliament quickened its pace of reform. During the thirties and forties, the nation abolished colonial slavery, commenced the public support of elementary education, began to improve the conditions of child labor, abandoned the Speenhamland dole system of poor relief for Benthamite work houses, reformed the Anglican Establishment, and eventually surrendered to the demands of the free trade advocates by repealing the Corn Laws. Great Britain seemed convulsed with agitation and transition. Within this movement and change, there lay opportunity for men preaching the gospel message, freshly reestablished by Joseph Smith on the American frontier.

Victorian religion played an even more substantial role in preparing the way for British Mormonism. “Probably in no other century, except the seventeenth and perhaps the twelfth,” George Kitson Clark has written of the times, “did the claims of religion occupy so large a part in the nation’s life.”<sup>6</sup> Of course Christianity had long extended its influence upon English civilization; from Lambeth Palace to the parish parsonage, it had permeated society. But during the nineteenth century, especially among the nation’s ascending middle class, religion became “vital.” It breathed energy, instilled conscience, imposed standards, and challenged the harsh developments of the age. Not all Englishmen fell under its spell. Nevertheless “active religion” set the tone of Victorian society, with a majority of England’s most influential citizens at least outwardly yielding to its claims.

The Wesleyan revival had earlier expressed this new spirit. It warmly criticized the Anglican Establishment’s worldliness, its mismanagement of temporalities, its simony, nepotism, and the holding of clerical livings in plurality. John Wesley, its leader, demanded a religion that touched the English laborer, and within the working class he found a field ready for harvest. When he died in 1791, perhaps 135,000 Englishmen formally called themselves “Methodists,” with another million being attracted to the movement’s precepts.<sup>7</sup>

A personal and vital religion lay at the heart of the Wesleyan revival. The unregenerate must probe his soul for impurities and cast them off in the redemption of Christ. He must be reborn. Sacrifice, enthusiasm, and service became the signs of inward grace. Concretely these virtues took the form of Bible study, Sabbath observance, sobriety, temperance, and the quest for family solidarity. Such inclinations were translated, in turn, into over one hundred philanthropic societies. There were Bible, Sabbatarian, Sunday School, temperance, missionary, educational, and antislavery societies—and many more besides. The ferment was broad-based and omnipresent.<sup>8</sup>

Most of England’s major denominations were influenced by the new religious spirit and participated in its organizational crusades. Concurrent with the Methodist success, such Anglican churchmen as Henry Venn vigorously preached the new evangelicalism, although with a greater loyalty to church government and tradition than Wesley. Venn not only led efforts to evangelize the industrial north, but later, with university men Isaac Milner and Charles Simeon, helped to make Cambridge an intellectual center for the Low Church view. Equally significant were the Clapham Saints led by William Wilberforce, Zachary Stephen, and John Venn. Along with their ally, Hannah Moore, the Claphamites were primarily interested in promoting practical religion and elevating “manners.”<sup>9</sup>

Some of the Dissenting sects also joined the rising evangelicalism. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists had long cherished religious individualism and personal salvation, and while they generally avoided the emotional extremes of Methodism, the power of romantic religion reignited their old vigor. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Congregational and Baptist church sittings rose over 300 percent and 400 percent respectively. In the new northern factory towns, where their growth was particularly strong, Dissenting chapels in the early decades of the century outnumbered Anglican churches by 3,454 to 2,535.<sup>10</sup>

British Mormonism drew upon all these religious sources, although laboring and left-wing religion were particularly important. Wesleyan Methodism earlier had aroused the working masses. But its political and religious conservatism, partially the result of the growing prosperity and respectability of its members, lessened its attraction among laborers. Several new denominations consequently arose teaching an unvarnished, emotional, biblical religion. The Kilhamites or New Connection Methodists seceded from Wesleyanism a few years prior to the turn of the eighteenth century. The Bible Christians formed their groups in southern England two decades later. But the Primitive Methodists and their leader, Hugh Bourne, particularly seemed to foreshadow Mormonism. The Primitive Methodists preached early Christianity with an emphasis upon biblical literalism, employed a lay ministry, and found conversions in the new industrial towns as they took the gospel directly to the people. "Our chapels," Bourne later wrote, "were the coal pit banks, or any other place; and in our conversation way, we preached the Gospel to all, good or bad, rough or smooth."<sup>11</sup>

While the seceding Wesleyan denominations preceded the Mormons by several decades, the Christian churches which clung to Chartism were contemporaries. Such lay preachers as Benjamin Rushton and William Thornton sought to instill a religious element in what was essentially a political movement. They denounced traditional Christianity's insouciance for the untutored, sought a return to fundamental morality, and preached such regenerative practices as temperance and teetotalism. Like other radical sects, they worshipped wherever two or three of the faithful might be met—in homes, public halls, or schools. They also frequently abandoned traditional theology for social and political protest. Clearly this was a religion of the people—informal and unpretentious in style yet responsive to laboring needs and issues.<sup>12</sup>

Owenism was another part of this early religious environment. Robert Owen, the New Lanark industrialist, social reformer, and agnostic, successively advocated factory paternalism, Parliamentary regulation of the mills, trade unionism, cooperative socialism, and,

ultimately, free thought spiritualism. He proclaimed a secular millenium for the laboring poor, preached the need for a revision of marriage and social relationships, and held out the hope of an American Zion at New Harmony, Indiana. Despite its secular protestations, Owenism flowed from the chiliasm of the post-1832 Reform excitement. Its methods were evangelical, and it drew as certainly upon the decline of Wesleyan Methodism among the working masses as did the schismatic Methodist sectarians.<sup>13</sup>

It was then from this matrix that the Latter-day Saints in Great Britain grew. The American missionaries, for example, drew heavily upon the new factory towns for conversions. At a time when half of the English population lived in villages of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants, LDS emigration records reveal that nine out of ten converts making their way to the United States possessed urban nativity. Forty percent came from cities of fifty thousand inhabitants or more. Such industrial districts as London, the west Midlands, south Wales, Lancashire, West Riding, and central Scotland contributed heavily to Mormon conversions and subsequently to emigration.<sup>14</sup>

If the typical British convert was urban, he also was drawn from the lower social levels. The William Clayton diary "leaves the impression that [the members of the Manchester Branch] were mostly of the working class; many lived in boarding houses, some were transient and some were illiterate."<sup>15</sup> Jennetta Richards, the wife of mission stalwart Willard Richards, received the opprobrium of the British Saints by donning a stylish veil and muff. Later she learned to "dress down" for her fellow Saints.<sup>16</sup> Brigham Young observed similar laboring class attitudes and standards. "I have gone to bed many a time," Young later recalled of his missionary days when he had lodged in the home of an English convert, "and when I have turned down the bed I would find the sheet patched from end to end, so that I would wonder which was the original sheet. . . . The rich and noble, as a general thing, have turned a deaf ear to the voice of the Elders of Israel."<sup>17</sup> Church shipping records confirm his observation. During the early 1840s, the occupational roles of the emigrants indicated only slightly more than 20 percent could be roughly judged as middle class. Thereafter the ratio steadily declined until by the 1860s it was less than 10 percent.<sup>18</sup> It was mainly "the poor and the ignorant," as Young described them, who found themselves gathered into the Mormon gospel net.<sup>19</sup>

Other information concerning the British convert is impressionistic but nevertheless suggestive. If the membership of the Manchester Branch were representative, most were in their twenties or thirties and unmarried. Consequently their freedom to accept a new religion and even a new citizenship were unrestrained by ties of marriage and a settled life.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Owen Chadwick's survey of Victorian religion found

many Latter-day Saints to have been weaned from “splinter-Methodists or splinter-Baptists.”<sup>21</sup> While a thoroughgoing study of the religious origins of British Mormons has yet to be undertaken, it is apparent that if Mormonism did not draw upon working-class denominationalism, it was at least being propelled by similar currents.

The American missionaries preached an uncomplicated message of primitive Christianity restored. “We opened the door to that nation in great simplicity,” Elder Kimball recalled. “The Lord appointed me to that work because I was willing to be the simplest.”<sup>22</sup> The intellectual E. L. T. Harrison agreed that early British Mormonism was unadorned. “Mormonism was then simply a Bible religion,” he recalled, “preaching a revival of the apostolic spirit, and gifts; a religion of the broadest charity, sublime in sentiment and philosophical thought.”<sup>23</sup> When the 1840 missionaries landed, they found the English Saints had discarded their Wesleyan hymnals. “They wanted new ones,” they reported, “for the *Bible* religion, and all is new to them.” Parley P. Pratt’s widely circulated tract, *A Voice of Warning*, clearly stated the LDS argument. Primitive Christianity “differs widely from all modern systems of religion, both in its offices, ordinances, powers, and privileges, inso-much that no man need ever mistake the one for the other.” Furthermore, Pratt held:

Were we to take a view of the churches, from the days that Inspiration ceased, until now, we should see nothing like the kingdom [established by Christ]. . . . But instead of apostles and prophets, we would see false teachers whom men had heaped to themselves, and instead of the gifts of the Spirit, we should see the wisdom of men; and instead of the Holy Ghost, many false spirits; instead of the ordinances of God, commandments of man; instead of knowledge, opinion; guess work, instead of Revelation; division, instead of union; doubt, instead of faith; despair, instead of hope; hatred, instead of charity; a physician, instead of the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick; fables, instead of truth; evil for good, good for evil; darkness for light, light for darkness; and in a word, anti-christ instead of Christ; the powers of earth, having made war with saints, and overcome them, until the words of God should be fulfilled.<sup>25</sup>

Primitive Christianity as practiced by the Mormons was not an abstract and lifeless religion. It touched, vitalized, and transformed lives. Even before Heber C. Kimball and his companions preached their first English sermon at Preston in 1837, they were assaulted by legions of “evil spirits with full-formed bodies.” Kimball believed himself and his cohorts were rescued by guardian angels.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, later in London three angels saved Kimball, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff from Satanic distress.<sup>27</sup> Such experiences seemed everywhere. Forty years after the event, Eli Kelsey’s ministry of miraculous healing in Scotland remained a Utah topic of conversation.<sup>28</sup> In turn the *Millennial Star*, the church organ in England, recorded over a score of devils cast out

of a woman in Leamington Spa,<sup>29</sup> the deaf and blind restored at Littlemore,<sup>30</sup> a night vision of the Apostle James at Bolton,<sup>31</sup> and miraculous healings and evil spirits in Southampton.<sup>32</sup> “The man that did not then believe in being ‘thoroughly spiritualized,’ ” Elder Harrison later wrote, “was the Apostate of those times!”<sup>33</sup>

Notions of approaching apocalypse furthered the new religion’s appeal. “Chiliasm has always accompanied revolutionary outbursts,” Karl Mannheim has observed, “and given them their spirit.”<sup>34</sup> English working-class religion fit the pattern. Joanna Southcott, the prototype for numerous subsequent enthusiasts, excited tens of thousands of followers with her millennial prophecies in 1801–4, again in 1814, and posthumously throughout the century in many derivative movements.<sup>35</sup> Thus when Orson Hyde issued in 1837 his *A Timely Warning to the People of England*, Mormonism’s first missionary broadside to be printed in England, it touched a responsive chord. “God will soon begin to manifest his sore displeasure to this generation,” Hyde warned.

Wo! be unto all the wicked ones of the earth; for the fire of God’s jealousy will consume them, root and branch, except they speedily repent.

Earthquakes, strange things and fearful sights, together with the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds, will cause men’s hearts to fail them for fear. . . .

As John was sent before the face of the Lord to prepare the way for his first coming, even so has the Lord now sent forth his servants for the last time, to labour in his vineyard at the eleventh hour, to prepare the way for his second coming.<sup>36</sup>

Like their seventeenth-century Puritan forefathers and their Owenite contemporaries, the Mormons preached a millennialism with an American twist. Before the conflagration, the repentant would gather to the American west to build a godly and egalitarian community. Between 1840 and 1890 some 55,000 British converts accordingly journeyed to the United States. These constituted only a fraction of the total British migration, which during the decade of 1845–54 alone dispatched three million settlers to America.<sup>37</sup> The British press explained the Saints’ growth as part of the broad trend of emigration. Mormonism’s “promise to lead [English laborers] out from their Egypt of task-work and subjection,” typically intoned the *Birmingham Daily Press*, “has made them rally round [the new religion] as around a new Moses sent from God.”<sup>38</sup>

There was of course an element of truth to the observation about Mormonism’s pecuniary lure. The English laborer, inured by the hungry 1840s, must have viewed the LDS American Zion as an opportunity and promise. The Mormon missionaries, who believed that religion should temporally bless as well as religiously sanctify, would not have had it otherwise. Such beliefs clearly found a willing response. Symptomatic of

what was to follow, the first British convert, the youthful George D. Watt, enthusiastically spoke of migrating to America within two weeks of his baptism, despite the missionaries' reticence on the topic.<sup>39</sup> Yet the attraction of a new life in America was not the only thing impelling the recently converted. Watt's stirring came after reading prophetic passages in the Saints' Book of Mormon, a religious impulse that P. A. M. Taylor's thoughtful study of the Saints' emigration seems to confirm. Taylor noted that the pulsations of Mormon migration often deviated from general English patterns. Since the latter usually flowed at high tide during periods of economic distress and receded during prosperity, other factors besides simple economic advantage must have been at work with the Mormons.<sup>40</sup>

To their Bible Primitivism, display of spiritual gifts, millenarianism, and communitarianism, the Mormon preachers buttressed their cause with other appealing doctrines. They virtually embraced Universalism, but tempered it with an intricate assortment of rewards based upon grace and works. In addition to his Bible, every elder carried a Book of Mormon, a religious history of pre-Columbian America. The scripture may have been unique to the Mormons, but its teachings were not. It equated true religion with Christology, reconfirmed the Old Testament cycle of prosperity conditioned upon righteousness, and taught a fundamental morality and charity. In turn the temperance of the Saints—in practice more moderation than abstinence—opened temperance halls for their use. English teetotalers found the Saints eminently effective in their cause.<sup>41</sup>

The Church's ministerial system also possessed appeal. American preachers by no means were unique to the English scene. Lorenzo Dow's revivalism had already aided the Primitive Methodists. Charles Grandison Finney had rallied English Congregationalists and Wesleyans. Lesser ministers regularly plied the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover the Mormon system of itinerancy fit prevailing patterns. Chartist mechanics, anti-Corn Law agitators, trade union artisans, as well as sectarian preachers traversed the Victorian countryside.<sup>42</sup> No doubt the penury and lack of pretension of the Mormon itinerants endeared them to their working-class congregations. When Elder Kimball first arrived in England "destitute of the comforts of life," he wore a donated camlet cloak that would cross the ocean six more times (twice with Kimball and on four other occasions as part of another missionary's wardrobe).<sup>43</sup> Likewise, upon landing in 1840, Brigham Young carried only six shillings, used his family's little trundle-bed quilt for an overcoat, wore a tattered cap of home manufacture, and possessed a pair of pantaloons so wanting in respectability that the Liverpool ladies pooled their means to secure an immediate replacement.<sup>44</sup>

Clearly the Saints' lay and unpretentious ministry worked to their advantage. The American missionaries might take the lead, but duly ordained English converts carried the ministerial load. This allowed Mormonism to shed whatever image it might have possessed as a foreign intruder. Indeed it facilitated the conversion of former preachers. Protestant ministers such as Thomas Kington and James Palmer might secure Mormon membership and Mormon priesthood on the same day and continue without interruption their errand for the Lord.<sup>45</sup>

Claims of an authorized priesthood gave the Mormon preacher special confidence. Joseph Smith, the founding Prophet, testified that Christ's disciples, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John, had confirmed upon him and his followers divine authority. The Church thus combined popular religion with the voice of authority, a mix that proved enormously energizing. As a result the Saints' lay ministers boldly stalked the land, speaking confidently and authoritatively. Parley Pratt addressed Queen Victoria in a written tract and informed her of approaching revolutions.<sup>46</sup> Twenty-year-old youths, similarly authorized, fearlessly delivered the warning voice in unfamiliar and friendless neighborhoods.

All this made England a fruitful field. "We find the people of this land, much more ready to receive the gospel, than those of America," wrote Young and Richards to their Church leaders, "for their priests have taught them but little, much of that is so foolish as to be detached at a glance."<sup>47</sup> Mormonism in fact became one of the few denominations to prosper in the working-class environment. Converts saw their new religion as a sharp contrast from the dour and cold formality of the Anglican and Nonconformist performances, with their stereotyped prayers, formalized sermons, purchased pews, and unhappy views of mankind's depravity. The Saints prospered in the 1840s in part because of inferior competition.<sup>48</sup>

Of course the success and image of British Mormonism changed. Like Chartism, Mormonism began to peak in Great Britain with the return of prosperity in the late 1840s. The official announcement of plural marriage in 1852, the simultaneous preaching of speculative doctrines, and the unfavorable publicity resulting especially from the 1857 "Utah War" in America made the decline precipitous.<sup>49</sup> As late as 1859, the Saints claimed to have seven to eight hundred congregations in Great Britain, supported by four thousand lay ministers.<sup>50</sup> But this at best was an Indian summer before an unyielding season of distress. During the last third of the century, congregations and membership melted before the twin forces of migration and apostasy, and baptisms never approached their earlier rates.

The early British convert made his mark in Utah. Some proved to be chaff. Nostalgically recalling British-Mormon working-class religion

and carrying as part of their cultural baggage the tradition of British dissent, some rebelled against Brigham Young's theocratic Zion and traveled into heretical byways, such as William S. Godbe's "New Movement" in the late 1860s and early 1870s.<sup>51</sup>

Most, however, proved desirable sheaves. Reflecting their nativity, they typically avoided agricultural pioneering and instead settled in Salt Lake City and in surrounding communities.<sup>52</sup> There, they exerted a non-proportional influence on such activities as commerce and culture. Such immigrants as William Nixon, Henry Dinwoody, Francis Armstrong, William Jennings, John Chislett, and William S. Godbe, and the Walker brothers became leading merchants, while Deseret's lectures and debating clubs, literary and artistic societies, choruses and musical bands, early magazines and newspapers, and little theaters were often dominated by British-born talent. Even more far-reaching for the development and progress of the restored Church, the Britisher brought to America his strong religious stirrings. Some, like George Q. Cannon, Charles W. Penrose, George Teasdale, and John R. Winder, became influential General Authorities. Others, including not a few transplanted British women, influenced local congregations. Occupying pulpits and Sunday School rostrums, they implanted Victorianism on both the current and rising Utah generation. If the British setting had proven hospitable to Mormonism, it also came to shape the values and practices of the maturing Church.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Heber C. Kimball to the Saints of the United States, Preston, England, 17 April 1840, in Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946–50), 4:115 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

<sup>2</sup>By Kimball's reckoning, he was gone from his American home in Kirtland, Ohio, "eleven months and two days." His stay in England was more abbreviated, "being on that land eight months and two days" (see *Journal of Discourses* 6:65. Kimball stated that there were already a few Saints in England upon his arrival (see *ibid.* 9:180). Kimball's various estimates of baptisms stemming from his first mission reached as high as 2,500 (see *ibid.* 4:108; 6:65).

<sup>3</sup>James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander, eds., *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton, 1840 to 1842*, Classic Mormon Diary Series, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), 4–11; Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pt. 1 of vol. 5 of *Ecclesiastical History of England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961–66), 438–39.

<sup>4</sup>Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census, 1870, *The Statistics of the Population of the United States*, 373. In this year the Salt Lake County population was 18,337 with 5,826 of British nativity. Another 118 came from Canada.

<sup>5</sup>Victorian reform agitation is treated in Patricia Hollis, "Pressure from Without: An Introduction," *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England*, ed. Patricia Hollis (London: Edward Arnold, 1974).

<sup>6</sup>George Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 20.

<sup>7</sup>Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 3 vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1965–83) is a standard treatment of the Wesleyan revival. See also R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 513–48; and Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), 130–43.

<sup>8</sup>Asa Briggs, *The Making of Modern England, 1783–1867* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 66–74; Clark, *The Making of Victorian England*, 147–205.

<sup>9</sup>Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

<sup>10</sup>Raymond G. Cowherd, *The Politics of English Dissent: The Religious Aspects of Liberal and Humanitarian Reform Movements from 1815 to 1848* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), 16.

<sup>11</sup>John Thomas Wilkinson, *Hugh Bourne, 1772–1852* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 32. See also E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour* (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 26–27 and Julia Stewart Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

<sup>12</sup>Harold Underwood Faulkner, *Chartism and the Churches: A Study in Democracy*, vol. 73 of *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), 42–58; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1964), 396–400.

<sup>13</sup>The parallels between Owenism and Mormonism have not escaped contemporary scholarship. See Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 801–2 and J. F. C. Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral World: Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 93, 137.

<sup>14</sup>P. A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 148–49, 157. For a discussion of the religious feeling in the industrial north where the Mormons enjoyed considerable success, see Paul T. Phillips, *The Sectarian Spirit: Sectarianism, Society, and Politics in the Victorian Cotton Towns* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

<sup>15</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 15, 22.

<sup>16</sup>*History of the Church* 3:276–77.

<sup>17</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 12:256–57.

<sup>18</sup>Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 150–51.

<sup>19</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 13:148.

<sup>20</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 22; compare with data found in Appendix A.

<sup>21</sup>Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 436. See also James B. Allen and Malcolm R. Thorp, “The Mission of the Twelve to England, 1840–41: Mormon Apostles and the Working Class,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 15 (Summer 1975): 499–526, especially 515, 519.

<sup>22</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 3:113; see also 6:65.

<sup>23</sup>*Leader*, 6 September 1873.

<sup>24</sup>*Times and Seasons* 1 (June 1840): 122, emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning, and Instruction to All People, or an Introduction to the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints* (Manchester: W. Shackleton and Son, 1841), 97, 110–11. The book had been circulated through the English mission even prior to its first British edition in 1841. Marvin S. Hill, “The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830–1844” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968) has suggested that Mormonism found a receptive and ready-made membership among American bible primitivists. The appeal of Primitivism reached across national boundaries.

<sup>26</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 3:229; 8:258.

<sup>27</sup>Wilford Woodruff, *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946), 286–87.

<sup>28</sup>Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 15 March 1887, 153, Historical Department, Library-Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).

<sup>29</sup>*Millennial Star* 9 (1 August 1847): 231–34.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.* 6 (1 July 1845): 28–29.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.* 9 (15 January 1847): 29–30.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.* 10 (15 May 1848): 153–54.

<sup>33</sup>*Leader*, 6 September 1873.

<sup>34</sup>Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, with a Preface by Louis Wirth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace World, 1968), 217. See also J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780–1850* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1979).

<sup>35</sup>James K. Hopkins, *A Woman to Deliver Her People: Joanna Southcott and English Millenarianism in an Era of Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982) and G. R. Balleine, *Past Finding Out: The Tragic Story of Joanna Southcott and Her Successors* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956).

<sup>36</sup>Orson Hyde, *A Timely Warning to the People of England*, broadside dated 19 August 1837, LDS Church Archives. See also Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 382–87 and W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1978), 218–38 especially.

<sup>37</sup>Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 144; Maldwyn Allen Jones, *American Immigration*, in *Chicago History of American Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 93–94.

<sup>38</sup>As cited in Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 32.

<sup>39</sup>Kimball to Saints, *Journal of Discourses* 7:16–17. Watt came to Kimball so enthused about the prospect of settling in America that reportedly his face shone “like that of an angel.” The missionary encouraged him. “I told him to prophecy on, for I knew it was of God” (*ibid.* 10:245). See also *ibid.* 14:97.

<sup>40</sup>Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 151–59.

<sup>41</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 36.

<sup>42</sup>Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, 34–63, reveals how much the “tramping system” dominated trade union employment patterns. Itinerancy was both a religious and secular phenomena of the times. The role of women in the lay and itinerant preaching of the times is treated by Deborah M. Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>43</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 6:65.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.* 7:229; 14:80–81.

<sup>45</sup>Allen and Thorp, “Mission of the Twelve,” 517.

<sup>46</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *A Letter to the Queen of England, Touching the Signs of the Times, and the Political Destiny of the World* (Manchester: Privately printed, 1841). Mario S. De Pillis, “The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Spring 1966): 68–88 argues that Mormonism’s authoritative voice was an essential ingredient for its American success. The argument seems to extend to England as well.

<sup>47</sup>Brigham Young and Willard Richards to the First Presidency of the Church, 5 September 1840, Joseph Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>48</sup>The inability of the established churches to reach into the new urban environment and their subsequent attempts later in the century is treated in K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963) and Desmond Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church: A Study of the Church of England, 1833–1889* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968).

<sup>49</sup>Ezra T. Benson said the reversal started with the 1856 Mormon Reformation, *Journal of Discourses* 6:178. At about this time Ezra T. Benson related that the British Saints were subject to widespread mobbings at the places of their public worship, *ibid.* 6:178–79.

<sup>50</sup>Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* 7:183.

<sup>51</sup>Ronald W. Walker, “The Godbeite Protest in the Making of Modern Utah” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Utah, 1977).

<sup>52</sup>Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 244.

# The Book of Mormon in the English Literary Context of 1837

Gordon K. Thomas

“Do you know anything of a wretched set of religionists in your country, superstitionists I ought rather to say, called Mormonites, or Latter-Day Saints?” So wrote the great English poet William Wordsworth to his American editor Henry Reed early in 1846. This is the only reference to Mormonism in Wordsworth’s surviving letters or other writings, and it may come as a shock to modern Latter-day Saints to find such anger and hostility towards us in a poet of whom we so often think as *our* poet, one who believed much of what we believe, knew what we know, and did not mind any more than we do defying the orthodox establishment of church and state for the sake of pursuing and publishing his unorthodox ideas. In fact, though, Wordsworth felt deep personal chagrin and sorrow over the inroads which Mormonism was making in Britain by the 1840s. A niece of his wife had joined the Church and was bound for Nauvoo, and it was that fact which occasioned his letter to Henry Reed, in which the poet added that their relative had “just embarked, we believe at Liverpool, with a set of the deluded followers of that wretch, in an attempt to join their society.” This headstrong girl was neither stupid nor unlearned. As Wordsworth wrote of her, “She is a young woman of good abilities and well educated, but early in life she took from her mother and her connections a methodistical turn, and has gone on in a course of what she supposes to be piety till she has come to this miserable close.”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, this hostility of Wordsworth, who was then England’s Poet Laureate, towards Mormonism was, as we well know, widely shared by many, perhaps most, men and women of prominence and public stature in the kingdom in the early years of the British Mission. That fact, too, though we are used to acknowledging it, may well continue to surprise us in a way. For the kinds of people of whom I am speaking, people of deep but generally unorthodox spiritual searchings and perceptions, of determinedly independent public stance, unafraid and undeterred in their personal pursuit of truth and their eagerness to share their own findings and tolerate those of others—these seem like the kinds of people from

whom Mormonism might have hoped for a fair and even appreciative hearing. I think of such literary figures, besides Wordsworth, as Coleridge and Shelley, Blake and Byron, all of them so different but all of them outspoken seekers for and defenders of religious truth in the early nineteenth century.

Of course, accidents of chronology kept many of these from ever hearing of the restored gospel. Blake died a decade before the first Mormon missionaries reached England, and Coleridge died in 1834. Byron left England for good in 1816, and his pursuit of truth and a meaningful existence led him to an early death in the Greek Revolution in 1824. Shelley drowned off the coast of Italy in 1822, almost eight years before the Church was even organized, though he, like others, seems to have had at least a hazy notion of what was coming when he wrote in his 1819 preface to his poetic drama *Promethius Unbound* of what he actually called a restoration as well as a transformation in human conditions and religious awareness and opportunity. Shelley believed then that he and his literary companions would have a great role to play in what lay ahead:

The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.<sup>2</sup>

My intent here is not to explore the fulfilling of Shelley's grand prophecy, for in any specific sense it was not fulfilled. The literary giants of early nineteenth-century England did not foster nor usher in the restoration of the gospel. Indeed, as we have seen, the only one of these giants who knew about Mormonism was Wordsworth, and his sole recorded response, on earth, was hostility. My aim, then, instead, is to explore what happened to prevent the kind of spiritual marriage between the gospel message and English poetry which would seem almost expectable and which Shelley even seems to have envisioned. I will suggest, and suggest only, for proof in matters of mental and artistic and social influences seems impossible, one key ingredient in the literary context of the day which seems likely to have poisoned the atmosphere which in so many other ways seemed so likely to be receptive.

The element of the literary context on which I shall focus is the discovery of a variety of treasures of ancient writings, all of which are bound to remind us in one way or another of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. It seems clear to me, here at the outset, that the literarily aware of Great Britain in 1837 and the ensuing years would surely have felt similarly reminded as they heard of the miraculous preservation and discovery and translation of the Book of Mormon. And the reminder would have been there whether for good or evil.

If the bringing to light of the Book of Mormon still ranks as the most miraculously dramatic recovery of ancient records we yet know of, even amid such modern discoveries as Linear B and Nag Hammadi and the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are other, if lesser, miracles. One of these, perhaps the most important ever in English literary studies, began to unfold just over a century before the opening of the British Mission, but it developed in several stages right up into the early nineteenth century. This was the almost miraculous survival of the only manuscript of the greatest poem written in the earliest form of our language, the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, which not only came through the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII and the scattering or destruction of their libraries in the sixteenth century but the accidental burning of the Robert Cotton library, in which it had been housed without yet having been really studied or recognized as a treasure, in 1731. In fact, it was this fire, which mostly just charred the edges but could so easily have destroyed the entire *Beowulf* manuscript, which first brought it to real public awareness. Even then, the poem was not yet safe. As one scholar says, "The history of *Beowulf*'s physical preservation is . . . something of a cliff-hanger."<sup>3</sup> A series of something very much like small miracles continued on into the next century. An edition of the poem was prepared in the late eighteenth century by a Danish scholar named Thorkelin, who made copies of the only manuscript in 1787. His hand-made copies still survive, and they preserve for us many words which have since vanished from the constantly deteriorating Cotton manuscript; but Thorkelin's printed edition itself was destroyed in 1807 when the British navy bombarded Copenhagen. Scholars, who do not often get excited on paper, still write of the "sensational . . . survival" of *Beowulf* over the years.<sup>4</sup> It is, for English literature, a spectacular example of a nearly miraculous voice from the dust, one of the unquestioned masterpieces of our poetry which has reached us through ways which seem defiant of human reason and logical expectation. I cannot help feeling that if *only* this story of the marvelous transmission of the poem *Beowulf* from ancient times to modern readers had been in English minds in 1837, the still more spectacular claims of the Book of Mormon to miraculous preservation and transmission would have found easier access. But the saga of the *Beowulf* manuscript was a positive influence which was to wind up almost buried amid still more spectacular negative influences.

Another positive influence, I believe, would have been the story of the saving and publishing to the world of the medieval folk ballads. This is a story with many strands, of which that of Dr. Thomas Percy is neither the first nor the most reliable and scholarly. But Bishop Percy had a success with the old British ballads which outweighed all others in its effect on the public and which had a reputation for authority and respectability which none of the literary discoveries of which I am

speaking could ever equal. Dr. Percy was an Oxford scholar and antiquarian of merit who became Anglican Bishop of Dromore in Ireland. He was a close and esteemed friend of the great and immensely influential Samuel Johnson, who put Percy in charge of “British antiquities” in the discussions of the famous Literary Club, which was founded under the leadership of Samuel Johnson in 1764 in London, and which for decades was the very center of English intellectual life and activity.<sup>5</sup> Johnson said of Percy that he was one “out of whose company I never go without having learnt something.”<sup>6</sup> And when Percy turned his attention to ferreting out, sometimes in nearly miraculous states of survival, and reviving and publishing the old ballads for modern readers, he acknowledged Samuel Johnson’s help and inspiration in the project.<sup>7</sup> The work which finally resulted was the monumental three-volume collection of medieval ballads and other popular poems, curiously mixed with some of Percy’s own compositions and some contemporary songs, published under the title *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765. It hit a popular nerve, fostered among other things in the public mind by the story of the preservation of the *Beowulf* manuscript, of increasing popular interest in the literary antiquities of English, rather than classical literature. And it fed that interest in very positive ways. Scholars agree that it “played a major part in revolutionizing English literary taste and made the way smooth” for later great poetic discoveries and achievements.<sup>8</sup> As with *Beowulf*, Percy’s *Reliques*, if it had existed alone in this literary context, would perhaps have helped make the way smooth too for the arrival of the Book of Mormon to British shores with the first missionaries in 1837.

But it was not alone. During this same period of growing excitement in literary Britain over those important and very positive discoveries of ancient writings now revealed in sometimes seemingly miraculous ways for modern readers, there were other spectacular claims being made for other discoveries which would eventually disillusion the public, especially the literary world of England, and for decades make even the most tolerant men of letters suspicious and resistant toward anything claiming to be a voice from the dust, that is to say a discovery of ancient writings.

One of these was the curious case of Thomas Chatterton, who began, as he said, at the age of twelve discovering poems written in the fifteenth century by, among others, a priest named Thomas Rowley. Whether in a fit of depression, or out of fear of discovery, or in pangs of conscience, or for other reasons only to be guessed at, Chatterton killed himself by drinking arsenic in London in 1770, at the age of only seventeen. It was mostly after his death that his name became known. In 1777, a very prominent scholar of medieval literature became involved in the Chatterton story. This was Thomas Tyrwhitt, a man renowned for

his study of the great medieval poet Geoffrey Chaucer and to whom, more than to any other single scholar, we owe the recovery of understanding of Chaucer and knowledge of how his poetry worked and how it was pronounced. At the very moment in which Thomas Tyrwhitt was achieving the beginnings of his great and deserved fame as a medievalist, with his publication of *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer; to which are added An Essay upon his Language and Versification: An Introductory Discourse and Notes*,<sup>9</sup> he turned his attentions to the Chatterton manuscripts. Tyrwhitt published the poems attributed by Chatterton to “the gode prieste Thomas Rowleie” and hailed them as among the great discoveries of literary antiquities.<sup>10</sup> These claims, coming in the context created not only by the reawakened and newly informed interest in Chaucer but also by such discoveries as that of *Beowulf* and Percy’s *Reliques*, attracted a great deal of attention. But the attention was naturally accompanied by scrutiny, and the Rowley poems could not stand up under scrutiny. They were soon revealed to be counterfeits, made up of a hodgepodge of Chaucerian and Spenserian language and Reformation ideas.<sup>11</sup> After a short period of horrified discussion and public debate, these poems were quite soon and almost universally acknowledged a fraud and an imposition, though even severe literary critics tended to praise the achievement of the boy Chatterton, while denouncing his deceit. Samuel Johnson said of him, “This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things.”<sup>12</sup> A quarter of a century later, Wordsworth praised Chatterton as “the marvelous Boy/ The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride”;<sup>13</sup> and in the next generation John Keats dedicated his first long poem, *Endymion*, to Chatterton. Probably such men felt little inclination to punish the boy Chatterton for his literary forgery because he had already punished himself so severely. But the revelation that yet another great discovery from antiquity had this time turned out to be a fraud certainly created both disillusionment and suspicion in the English reading public. Chatterton polluted the well of truth.

The most spectacular of all the claims for literary discoveries in this period of English history, and the one which seems most like a sort of parallel parody of the Book of Mormon, was that involving the young Scotsman James Macpherson. Macpherson’s discoveries and claims and publications were to provoke both immense popular excitement internationally and also a long-lasting scholarly controversy, finally resulting, by 1837, in a British literary public “made wary” of all more or less miraculous claims for ancient books discovered and translated by modern men for modern readers.<sup>14</sup>

In 1760, Macpherson, just twenty-four years old and fresh out of college, published a work he entitled *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*

*Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language*, the first of several books which he later collected and compiled into a single work published under the title of *The Poems of Ossian* in 1765.<sup>15</sup> The name of Ossian was not new to Macpherson's readers. Both Ireland and Scotland had long claimed for their cultural heritage the third-century Celtic bard who insisted that he wrote under divine inspiration and who related his own exploits and those of his illustrious father Fingal or Finn. It was a tradition as old and honored as the British legends of King Arthur and his Round Table knights—and equally misty in its origins and evidences. What was new about Macpherson's works was his claim to have discovered and have in his possession Ossian's original third-century Gaelic manuscripts, writings miraculously preserved on wood and stone and other ancient materials. His earliest discoveries, which he duly translated into English, spoke of even greater discoveries to be made if Macpherson could find sufficient financial backing for the needed searches. There was a sensational response to his appeal for funds; the money was easily provided; Macpherson went off into the Highlands; and he returned with a manuscript, so he said, of a full-blown epic. His translations into English were metrical and musical prose, and they were an immediate triumph. Understandable enough—for until then, no one had ever claimed to have discovered writings from the ancient Celts nor even to have thought that ancient Gaelic was a written language. Macpherson's claims then were doubly great: he had evidence to prove the literacy of the ancient inhabitants of Britain, and he proved them not merely literate but among the foremost literary artists of all time. These enormous claims were readily accepted, for the world was eager for great literary discoveries. Further, it was an age of growing national pride, and there were many eager and ready to believe that just as *Beowulf* had shown the literary greatness of which ancient Germanic people were capable and thus allowed Northern Europeans to enjoy the kind of sense of ancient cultural authority which Greeks and Italians had enjoyed for millennia, now the Celts had their Ossian and Fingal.

The Scottish were especially enthusiastic. One contemporary defender of Macpherson's claims within the Edinburgh literary establishment wrote: "The compositions of Ossian are so strongly marked with characters of antiquity, that although there were no external proof to support that antiquity, hardly any reader of judgment and taste could hesitate in referring them to a very remote aera."<sup>16</sup>

Translations into many European languages followed speedily; Cesarotti's translation into the Italian was said to be Napoleon Bonaparte's favorite book.<sup>17</sup> In Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, published in 1774, the lovers Werther and Charlotte found such joy as was possible for them not in Homer, whose works they rejected, but in reading from the

poems of Ossian to each other.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the popularity of Macpherson's productions achieved immense proportions not only throughout the British Isles and all over Europe but in America as well, where they were praised enthusiastically by such men of discernment as Thomas Jefferson and Walt Whitman.<sup>19</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson noted that Ossian, as Macpherson had translated him, "for poetry . . . had superiorities over Dryden and Pope."<sup>20</sup> And Henry David Thoreau, in an amazing burst of enthusiasm, extended the favorable comparison to Homer, Pindar, and Isaiah.<sup>21</sup>

If, however, there was an immediate, a widespread, and, for several decades at least, an enduring acclaim for Macpherson's translations, there was also from the very first considerable suspicion of his claims in certain quarters. The same Dr. Samuel Johnson who had helped with Percy's *Reliques* and had praised Chatterton's talents even while regretting his fraud, decided that the Macpherson case required some probing. Though of advanced age and not in very good health, Johnson, who was always reluctant to leave the comforts and civility of life in London, undertook an extensive journey into Scotland and its outlying isles in order to make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations. In 1775 he published his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* and announced to the public his finding that Macpherson may have had acquaintance with a few oral fragments of old stories and poems, but that the work purporting to be a translation was in fact an original composition, and not even a very good one. When one of Macpherson's defenders asked Johnson whether he really thought that "any man of modern age could have written such poems," Johnson's reply was, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children."<sup>22</sup> Macpherson promptly challenged Johnson to a duel, but the great scholar retorted, "I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian."<sup>23</sup>

A great and long controversy ensued, with many important men of letters taking sides. Thomas Gray, the poet and Oxford scholar, wrote that he would gladly go to the Scottish Highlands to behold the genius who was the author of Ossian's poems if he believed, as he could not, that it might be any man alive in modern times.<sup>24</sup> Robert Burns was so certain of the authenticity of Macpherson's publication that he spoke of Ossian as among "the glorious models after which I endeavor to form my conduct."<sup>25</sup> And Macpherson was able to the end of his life to maintain considerable public faith in his claims by promising to publish the original manuscripts "as soon as the translator shall have time," as he said, "to transcribe them for the press."<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, he became very wealthy, entered Parliament, and when he died in 1796 was buried in Westminster Abbey, all without ever producing the manuscripts. As Johnson wrote, "Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they

were never shown.”<sup>27</sup> Eleven years after Macpherson’s death, that is in 1807, the poems did appear in the “original” Celtic language, when they were easily seen to be mere translations from Macpherson’s productions in English back into rather shoddy modern Gaelic.<sup>28</sup> Knowledgeable scholars no longer debated the issue, and the so-called “Ossianic Controversy” which once engulfed the literary circles of Europe and America had died. Dr. Johnson’s analysis has been shown to be right, and Macpherson’s “translations” are now known to be perhaps the most notorious fraud in literary history.

It is easy to imagine the damaging effects of such a conclusion to such a controversy on the sincere efforts of those first Latter-day Saint missionaries who went to Great Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century carrying the Book of Mormon and being largely or totally unaware of the literary context into which their book inevitably made them enter. In presenting the Book of Mormon in such a poisoned literary atmosphere, they faced irrational and predetermined distrust. The reading public of Britain had become very wary and cynical after the events I have described, and understandably so. What had for a time seemed almost like the hand of God active in preserving and revealing ancient writings had become a mixture of truth and blatant falsehood, with the falsehood leaving, of course, the stronger impression. Into the British literary context of disappointed hopes and cynical fraud entered the Book of Mormon in 1837. The missionaries who carried it would have found difficulty in making appeals based on either logic or tradition. Perhaps, in fact, the Lord had allowed the literary events of the preceding decades to unfold in such a way that the only valid appeal was to the Spirit.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>William Knight, ed., *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, 3 vols. (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969), 334.

<sup>2</sup>Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Kenneth Neil Cameron (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 134.

<sup>3</sup>A. Kent Hieatt, introduction to *Beowulf and Other English Poems*, ed. and trans. Constance B. Hieatt (New York: Odyssey Press, 1967), 2.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>John Wain, *Samuel Johnson* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 237.

<sup>6</sup>Michael Stapleton, *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 686.

<sup>7</sup>Wain, *Samuel Johnson*, 201.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Stapleton, *Cambridge Guide*, 905.

<sup>10</sup>Ernest Bernbaum, *Guide through the Romantic Movement* (New York: Ronald Press, 1949), 156–57.

<sup>11</sup>Albert C. Baugh et. al., *A Literary History of England* (New York: Appleton, Century, and Crofts, 1948), 1019.

<sup>12</sup>James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, in *The Portable Johnson and Boswell*, ed. Louis Cronenburger (New York: Viking Press, 1947), 240.

<sup>13</sup>William Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest D. Selincourt, rev. Helen Darbishire, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952–59), 2:236.

<sup>14</sup>Baugh et. al., *Literary History*, 1019.

<sup>15</sup>Stapleton, *Cambridge Guide*, 552.

<sup>16</sup>Hugh Blair, "A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," in *The Poems of Ossian*, trans. James Macpherson (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1847), 54.

<sup>17</sup>*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. "Macpherson, James."

<sup>18</sup>W. P. Ker, "The Literary Influence of the Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, 15 vols. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1939), 10:245–73.

<sup>19</sup>Frederic I. Carpenter, "The Vogue of Ossian in America: A Study in Taste," *American Literature* 2 (January 1931): 405–7.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 412.

<sup>22</sup>Boswell, *Samuel Johnson*, 93.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>24</sup>Bernbaum, *Romantic Movement*, 20.

<sup>25</sup>John Robert Moore, "Wordsworth's Unacknowledged Debt to Mcpherson's *Ossian*," *PMLA* 40 (June 1925): 363.

<sup>26</sup>Ker, "Literary Influence," 261.

<sup>27</sup>Boswell, *Samuel Johnson*, 192.

<sup>28</sup>Edward D. Snyder, *The Celtic Revival in English Literature: 1760–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 82–84.



A map of Manchester, 18 September 1843 (from Ordnance Survey 1, Sheet 88, Huddersfield)

# Mormons in Victorian Manchester

Jan G. Harris

Manchester Mormons were typical of many members of the Church who were baptized between 1838 and 1860, the early years of rapid growth in the British Mission. The Manchester Branch was one of the largest branches in England and was located in an industrial and urban setting, the kind of environment in which the majority of British converts lived.<sup>1</sup> A study of the members reveals many things about the rank and file English Mormon at that time. Through the demographic data extracted from branch records and personal information from journals, we can round out a picture of these people not only in terms of what work they did and where they lived, but also how they fit into the larger pattern.<sup>2</sup> By placing them in their historical setting, we may gain an understanding of some of the members' actions and attitudes during the Victorian era.

Mormons in Manchester were ordinary working-class people. They lived in working-class neighborhoods, and most of them, with the notable exception of William Clayton, the first branch president, worked with their hands. The only characteristic that set them apart from their working-class neighbors was their interest in religion. There was a consensus among observers of nineteenth-century Manchester that the working classes were indifferent to religion and generally did not attend public worship. Friedrich Engels claimed:

The working man does not understand religious questions, and does not trouble himself about it. . . . All the writers of the bourgeois are unanimous on this point, that the workers are not religious and do not attend church.<sup>3</sup>

Leon Faucher, a French observer, wrote about his impressions of Manchester in 1844. He describes a typical Sunday morning with middle-class families "walking along in silence, and with a reserved and formal attitude toward church and chapels," while the members of the working class

loiter on the thresholds of their cottages, or lounge in groups at the corners of the streets, until the hour of service is terminated, and the public houses are opened. Religion is presented to them in such a sombre and gloomy aspect; it succeeds so well in addressing neither the senses or imagination, nor the heart that it remains the exclusive patrimony of the rich.<sup>4</sup>

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Jan G. Harris lives in Aurora, Colorado. This article reflects research for her thesis for the M.A. in history at Brigham Young University, which she completed in 1987.

John Kent writes that while a majority of the urban working classes professed a belief in God, they limited their outward religious observances to religious holidays such as christenings, marriages, and burials.<sup>5</sup>

The Mormon converts were different. In contrast to the majority of the working class, many had been active members of other religious sects before they joined the LDS church. Even the converts who did not belong to other religious organizations prior to their conversions often described themselves as “seekers” because they were disillusioned with organized religion and were seeking Christ’s church. Of the twenty-one Manchester Branch members known to have written journals, nine wrote of their dissatisfaction with organized religion before their conversion to Mormonism. Their feelings follow the same pattern of religious behavior that Malcolm Thorp describes in his study of the religious background of British LDS converts. Thorp reports that converts came from a variety of religious backgrounds and that the churches they had attended were composed of predominantly middle- and upper-class congregations.

Manchester Mormons, like the Mormons in Thorp’s study, felt that the major reason for their baptism into the LDS church was the concept of the restoration of biblical truth included in the theology of Mormonism. The experience of James Burgess was typical of many converts’ search for truth:

I got a little astray in the world for a short time and thence I begin to think about my soul and first to one chapel and then to another but I did not think that any of them was the Church of God. Then I joined this Church and began to serve the Lord. I was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the nineteenth of October, 1840.<sup>6</sup>

After their conversion, Mormons tended to be more active with their religion than members of other denominations. Horace Mann wrote:

Within a short period since the introduction of this singular creed, as many as 222 chapels or stations have been established with accommodations for 30,783 worshippers or hearers. The activity of the disciples of this faith is evidenced by the frequency with which they occupy these meeting places. Out of a total of 222 places as many as 147 (or 66 percent) were open in the morning, 187 (84 percent) were open in the afternoon, and 193 (or 87 percent) in the evening. Comparison with similar statistics of the other churches will show that this is much above the average frequency of services.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to church attendance, Mormons devoted much of their time to missionary work. Even though most English elders were not officially full-time missionaries, they were very active in preaching the gospel and were responsible for the major part of the growth of the Church in England. For example, John Druce had been a member of the Church for only ten weeks when he was called to be a local missionary.

He reported that he baptized his first convert one month later. After being a member for a year, he was appointed to preside over the branches in Middleton and Blakely. He also served as president of the Salford, Pendleton, and Cross Moor branches.<sup>8</sup>

Except for their religious attitudes and activities, Manchester Mormons were typical inhabitants of the city. They were fairly young, most being baptized in their twenties or early thirties. There were more women than men, and many were single. Nevertheless, a substantial number were married and had families.<sup>9</sup> The age and sex of the Mormons reflected the general population trends of industrialized cities in England during the early Victorian era.<sup>10</sup> Branch records reveal that most of the Mormons, like a majority of the inhabitants of Manchester, immigrated from other areas of England. According to the 1851 census, about one-fourth of the population were natives of the city. For Mormons, the proportion of Manchester natives was about one-third. The immigrants primarily came from nearby industrial and rural areas of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire.<sup>11</sup>

The primary reason for migration to Manchester was economic. Manchester was the most extensive manufacturing town in England. People were attracted to it because of opportunities for employment. For example, William Barton, a branch member, had lived in Carlisle where his father was a printer. The business failed, so the family moved to Manchester. They lived in the city for one year and then moved to Sunnyside, just a few miles distant. After about eight months, they moved back to Manchester where the children could get jobs.<sup>12</sup> This kind of short-term migration was typical of the period.<sup>13</sup> Since the hometowns of most members were not far away, it was possible for them to visit relatives and spread the gospel after they had joined the Church.

The vast majority of members were manual laborers. Within the branch, workers were distinguished by the security of their jobs. The skilled artisans had good educations by Victorian standards and were relatively steadily employed and earned good wages. Unskilled laborers suffered from sporadic unemployment and low wages. However, even the better-off faced hardships in living in a rapidly growing industrial city.<sup>14</sup> Manchester was the first city in England to undergo the rapid transformation of industrialization. Working-class housing was built close to the factories so the workers could walk to work, as there was no cheap public transportation. As a result of the proximity to the factories, the air was smoky, and the dwellings were inundated by soot. In addition, houses were built quickly and were of poor quality, public sanitation was almost nonexistent, and living conditions were crowded.<sup>15</sup>

Although most of the members were manual laborers, living conditions and financial situations varied substantially. For example, Edward Robinson considered himself to be fairly well-off. He was

trained as a footman for the gentry. His responsibilities included driving the coach and caring for the horses. He was twenty-one when he married Mary Smith, a tutor for his employer's family. The Robinsons' position improved when Edward was promoted in 1837 to be the conductor of the "Rocket," the first train to run in Manchester. Edward's son described their home as comfortable because his father made "a good salary and had a thrifty wife." Mary joined the Church in 1839, and Edward was baptized a year later. The family emigrated in 1842. The decision to go to the United States was difficult because Edward was reluctant to leave his job.<sup>16</sup>

The Richard Daniels Brown family lived under very different conditions. The Browns were originally from Wigan, Lancashire, just a few miles from Manchester. In Wigan, Richard was a dresser and weaver, and he and his wife Margaret had seven children. Later he lost his job because of failing eyesight and moved to Manchester to work in a cotton mill. It was there that he heard about the Church and was baptized. At that time he earned only twelve shillings a week. He felt fortunate to get any job because work was scarce at the time. However, he couldn't support the entire family, so the children began to work in the factories. Even this was not enough, and the family suffered intensely from lack of food. In December 1849, just five months after Richard was baptized, the family went to the workhouse for help. Eventually they were able to subsist without public aid, but finances were always strained.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of the Browns, and many working-class families like them, the cycle of poverty followed a predictable pattern. As a young single man, Richard Brown was able to earn plenty of money to meet his needs. When he was first married, his wife also worked. Their combined income was sufficient for a comfortable life. As children were born, Margaret could no longer work, and the family lived at a subsistence level until the children became young adult wage earners and helped ease the financial burden.<sup>18</sup> The Brown family continued to struggle in England until 1864 when Richard and Margaret sailed for America. Their son Thomas had preceded his parents and sent money for the rest of the family to emigrate.<sup>19</sup>

The examples of the Browns and Robinsons show the diverse economic circumstances of the Manchester Mormons. During the early years of the mission, the Church did not have a formal welfare organization, and all aid for the needy came from sympathetic family, friends, and members of the branch. Members helped each other when they could, but many of them were already living at a subsistence level and had no money to spare. Financial aid was usually short-term because the majority of members did not have the resources to give substantial assistance. And even these limited efforts at relieving economic distress

sometimes ran into difficulties, as is evident in the case of Sarah Duckworth. At the 17 January 1840 council meeting, a decision was made that she should go to Brother Jackson's for two weeks and that money should be collected to help Joseph Millwood during his illness.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, Sarah did not get along with Brother Jackson's wife, and she had to leave. Later the branch took a subscription for her. The last journal entry William Clayton made about Sarah reveals some of the problems the branch had in giving members long-term assistance. He wrote:

Sarah should have lived at Brother Jacksons 2 weeks but his wife was not willing. Sarah had been at the Bewshers five days—but Bewsher's could not do with. I had talked with Sister Bewsher about Sarah had no where to go—no bed to sleep on and something must be done immediately. The subscription was to purchase a bed and she might have Mary Ann Johnsons room and the church pay the whole rent of house.<sup>21</sup>

Ultimately, the Church could not support her, and she spent the last part of her life in a workhouse where she died in 1852.<sup>22</sup>

In some cases, the branch was unable to give any aid. The 1844 Manchester Branch Historical Record preserves a pathetic plea from a member for help due to "extreme poverty." He was told by the leadership that the Church could not help because of the "extreme poverty" of the branch. However, in response to a report that some Saints were perishing from lack of food, the branch council later that year passed a resolution to have a collection on Sunday for the needy.<sup>23</sup>

There were many other instances when branch members acted as a community by helping each other in a variety of ways. They tried to take care of each other when there was sickness. Entries such as these are common in William Clayton's journal:

Went to see Brother Burgess child. Very sick. Not likely to recover. . . . Brother Green rather sick. Alice Hardman sick. . . . Been to see Paul Harris—sick. . . . Went to see Brother Burgess. Very sick . . . was called this A.M. at 3 o'clock to Sister Dea. I found her very ill—insensible. Prayed with her and she appeared better.<sup>24</sup>

These Mormons had some unique emotional challenges that strengthened their sense of comradeship. Although most members had at least one other family member living within the branch, nearly one-third had no family members who joined the Church. Even when there were family members who joined the Church, it often took several years to achieve a harmony of beliefs. Baptismal dates show that there were several years between the baptismal dates of spouses, children, brothers, and sisters.<sup>25</sup> As a result, many members had to deal with negative pressure about religion from family, friends, and employers. This caused the members to rely on one another for spiritual and emotional support.

Difficulties associated with joining the Church when there was family disapproval were noted in several journals. Charles Miller, a branch member and later branch president, wrote about the problems he had with his wife, Jane, when he joined the Church. He recounts the time when he left his job to become a full-time missionary:

[I heard] my wife crying because I had Left my employment where I had worked fifteen years for Mathew Gibbons. . . . I told her God would provide and left home rejoicing in my God and at the Close of the week returned with means for her and for to buy a book that was important to me.<sup>26</sup>

This would have been a trial to any wife's faith, but at that time Jane was not even a member of the Church. Eventually she was baptized, but there was a conflict about the importance of Church service before she joined. In at least one family the conflict was never resolved. John Needham, a branch member, noted in his journal, "Sister Poole's husband was there in the church, but since been cut off. She suffered much persecution from him and has since left him."<sup>27</sup>

Not only did membership in the Church sometimes bring family conflict, it could also put one's employment at risk. James Jepson, a worker in a cotton mill, was fired when his employer found out that he had joined the Church. A few weeks later his former employer passed Jepson on the street and asked him if he still planned to go to Utah. Jepson said "yes." The employer told him that he had fired him to discourage him from going, but if he was still planning to go he could have his job back until he left.<sup>28</sup>

Because of the opposition many members felt from people who did not agree with their beliefs, they derived comfort from their friendships with fellow Latter-day Saints and enjoyed frequent meetings and social gatherings. Although the size of the branch grew from 160 in 1840 to 730 in 1851, members frequently met in small groups rather than one large congregation. This gave them the opportunity to strengthen one another. The branch was divided into small districts that met in different locations throughout the city.<sup>29</sup> These groups met on Sundays and also on other days of the week, not only for religious instruction but also for self-improvement. According to John Druce, the Poland Street room was open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings for reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>30</sup> James Newton, who was first counselor to James Walker, wrote about his duties in relationship to the districts: "i had to visit them as often as i could so that i was at some meeting every night in the week. . . . i preached the gospel many times publick in Manchester streets, also rooms and Halls."<sup>31</sup>

Despite the practice of members meeting in small groups, missionaries tended to prefer large audiences when they introduced the gospel. When the American missionaries first came to Manchester, they

attempted to get permission to be guest speakers at established churches. When they were unable to get invitations, they held small meetings in obscure places. Their first meeting was in a shop cellar at Paul Harris's shoemaking establishment. Although this was not a prestigious place to hold a meeting, their efforts were fruitful. At least one person was moved by what he heard. Paul Harris, the host, joined the Church.<sup>32</sup> There must have been many other similar meetings in homes and small rooms. However, the missionaries concentrated their efforts in procuring places where they could reach the largest numbers of people at one time. The Mormons leased Carpenter's Hall for large missionary meetings and conferences. These meetings were advertised on handbills and by word of mouth and were attended by both members and nonmembers. Carpenter's Hall was an ideal place to meet because it had a seating capacity of two thousand people at a cost of two pounds per meeting.<sup>33</sup> According to John Needham, "it was a large commodious place with a gallery at each end."<sup>34</sup>

Church meetings were more than sermons; they also provided opportunities for members to visit each other and to get acquainted with the Apostles and other prominent missionaries from America. John Needham wrote about an excursion he took with the Apostles during one conference:

I went to the zoological gardens with Elders Brigham Young, Smith, Kimball, Richards, Pratt, Turley and Clayton. We enjoyed ourselves very much. The monkeys were playful and would take anything out of our hands without seeming afraid. The brethren seemed to rejoice together, as it was some time since so many of the Quorum met together to enjoy one another's company.<sup>35</sup>

On another occasion Needham describes a party at the Hardman home:

I went to Mother Hardman's where several brethren and sisters had met to join in a feast of pancakes. The serving was quite new to me and Brother Clift. We had to turn our own cakes, but unfortunately some went on the floor. We had plenty of [illegible] to wipe our mouth and give us water. We sang a hymn and the seventies, Brother Clift, and myself went to Brother Beaches again.<sup>36</sup>

Another characteristic that set the Mormons apart was the absence of a paid clergy. This was much different from other denominations where leadership came primarily from the middle and upper classes. As a result, Mormonism gave many members leadership opportunities that they would not have had as members of other denominations. For example, Charles Miller, a shoemaker, was the Manchester Branch president in 1843, and John Druce, an engraver, served as president in 1844. Both of these men were manual laborers and would not have had

the opportunity to hold important leadership positions in middle-class churches.<sup>37</sup>

Emigration was another factor that influenced the converts and the branch. Although emigration was not a primary motivating factor for baptism, it certainly had a profound effect on converts' personal lives and on the Church as a whole because it was the most visible reason why membership in England decreased. During the first two years of the mission, the leadership in Britain tried to dissuade members from emigrating to the United States. This was probably due to the fact that during this time period the Saints had been driven from Missouri and were just beginning to establish themselves in Illinois. It was not until 1841 that the brethren counseled the converts to prepare to emigrate to Zion.<sup>38</sup>

Emigration was encouraged by the Church leadership in editorials printed in the *Millennial Star* and sermons preached at branch and conference meetings. The philosophy guiding Church leaders was the belief that the kingdom of God was not reserved for heaven. It was an earthly institution that was to be established by the Saints. In an epistle from Nauvoo dated 28 August 1841, the Twelve Apostles instructed English converts:

All Saints who desire to do the will of heaven, . . . come . . . to the places of gathering as speedily as possible, for the time is rapidly approaching when the Saints will have occasion to regret that they have so long neglected to assemble themselves together and stand in holy places, awaiting those tremendous events which are so rapidly approaching the nations of the earth. . . . We recommend to the brethren in England to emigrate in the fall or winter.<sup>39</sup>

Because of the belief that emigration was the "will of heaven," "gathering" became one of the major tools for the establishment of Zion. Two factors illustrate the importance and magnitude of migration. The first is that 50 percent of the members who were baptized by 1840 and did not eventually emigrate to Zion were excommunicated from the Church.<sup>40</sup> The reasons why these members decided not to emigrate are not recorded. However, "gathering" was clearly an outward sign of faithfulness to the Church. The second evidence of the magnitude of the migration is that by 1860 almost half the population of Utah was British.<sup>41</sup> Since the Manchester Mormons were representative of the many members in England, these statistics illustrate that it was the ordinary people, from Manchester and elsewhere, who were doing the extraordinary work of building Zion.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See P. A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965); and Malcolm R. Thorp, "The Religious Background of the Mormon Converts in Great Britain, 1837–52," *Journal of Mormon History* 4 (1977): 51–66.

<sup>2</sup>Branch Records were the primary source for statistical data, including names, baptismal dates, addresses, priesthood office, excommunications, emigrations to Utah and other parts of England, and deaths. Approximately 2,100 different names were listed. See Manchester Branch, "Record of the Members," pt. 3, Family History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Manchester Branch Records).

<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. W. O. Henderson and W. H. Chaloner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 71.

<sup>4</sup>Leon Faucher, *Manchester in 1844: Its Present Condition and Future Prospects* (London: Simpkin Marshall and Co., 1844), 53–54.

<sup>5</sup>John Kent, "Feelings and Festivals: An Interpretation of Some Working Class Religious Attitudes," in *The Victorian City: Images and Reality*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 2:855–71.

<sup>6</sup>James Burgess, Diaries, 2, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).

<sup>7</sup>Horace Mann, "Report and Tables on England and Wales Population," introduction to vol. 10 of Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1970), 156.

<sup>8</sup>John Druce, Journal, 64, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo (hereafter cited as Harold B. Lee Library).

<sup>9</sup>Manchester Branch Records.

<sup>10</sup>Alan Rogers, *Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman Group, 1977), 31–33.

<sup>11</sup>Manchester Branch Records; Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 33.

<sup>12</sup>William Barton, Diary, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>13</sup>Anderson, *Family Structure*, 33.

<sup>14</sup>Unfortunately, Manchester branch records do not reveal the occupation of members. However, some members did mention their jobs and the jobs of other members in their journals and letters. From these records, seventeen different occupations were identified. See Jan Harris, "Mormons in Victorian Manchester" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1987), 160–74.

<sup>15</sup>See, for example, Engels, *Condition of the Working Class*; François Vigier, *Change and Apathy: Liverpool and Manchester during the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970); and John D. Writh and Robert L. Jones, *Manchester and São Paulo: Problems of Rapid Urban Growth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 140.

<sup>16</sup>Myrtle Robinson Senstrand, "Biography of Edward Robinson (Pioneer)," in *History of Utah Pioneers of Adams Camp*, typescript, 2–5, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>17</sup>Vance M. Holland, comp., *Thomas Daniels Brown and Esther Wardle* (Salt Lake City: Brown Family Organization, 1962), 44–46.

<sup>18</sup>Anderson, *Family Structure*, 36.

<sup>19</sup>Holland, *Thomas Daniels Brown*, 46.

<sup>20</sup>James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander, eds., *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton, 1840–1842* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Press, 1974), 70.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>23</sup>"Manchester Branch Historical Record," 8 March and 24 May 1844, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>24</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 56, 93, 94, 113.

<sup>25</sup>Manchester Branch Records.

<sup>26</sup>Charles D. Miller, Diary, 9, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>27</sup>John Needham, Autobiography, 38, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>28</sup>James Jepson, Jr., Memoirs, 5, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>29</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 67.

<sup>30</sup>John Druce, Journal, 28, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>31</sup>James Lee Newton, Journal, 11, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>32</sup>Richard Steele, Journal, 6, LDS Church Archives; and Needham, Autobiography, 3.

<sup>33</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (1946–50; reprint, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), 4:214; 5:418 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

<sup>34</sup>Needham, Autobiography, 13.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>37</sup>For further information on these people see Harris, "Mormons in Victorian Manchester," 166, 170.

<sup>38</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 92.

<sup>39</sup>*History of the Church* 4:410.

<sup>40</sup>Allen and Alexander, *Manchester Mormons*, 22.

<sup>41</sup>The 45 percent figure was arrived at by comparing the number of British members who immigrated to the United States between 1840 and 1859 with the number of people living in Utah in 1860. The number of emigrants was taken from Richard L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain*, 245. The population of Utah was recorded by the United States Bureau of the Census and reprinted in Richard D. Poll, ed., *Utah's History* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 688.

These figures do not include the unrecorded number of members who left Britain individually or in small groups. In addition, they do not reveal the number of emigrants who died on the trip or after arrival, those who left the Church in the widespread disaffection at Nauvoo, and those who left England before 1859 but did not arrive in Utah until after 1860.

Although these statistics are obviously incomplete, they are still significant because they show that in just numbers alone, the British converts had a great impact on the growth of the Church.

# The Voyage of the *Ellen Maria*, 1853

Rulon A. Walker

The *Ellen Maria*, “a good-looking craft” in the eyes of one of her passengers,<sup>1</sup> lay quiet as a sleeping duck at Mosely Docks in Liverpool, England, in early January 1853. From a distance, the crosshatch pattern of her masts and yardarms blended with those of other sailing ships into a forest of bare horizontals and verticals reaching skyward along the banks of Mersey River. As a square-rigger packet out of the yard of Harrison Springer in Richmond, Maine, the *Ellen Maria* was of modest dimensions among the ships engaged in carrying converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints over the North Atlantic in that year.<sup>2</sup> Her rated tonnage of 768 was third to the lowest of the ten ships chartered. She would carry 332 Latter-day Saints in completing this, her third and last voyage.<sup>3</sup>

As with dinosaurs, sailing ships came in assorted shapes and sizes. Packets were built for speed, and “these strong and sturdy square riggers . . . were built to fight the seas.”<sup>4</sup> Three naked tree trunks, or masts, to which the yards and sails were attached, were the basic superstructure. *Ellen Maria*’s hull from the bow to stern measured 150 feet, 9 inches; at the widest point her sides were 33 feet, 5 inches apart.<sup>5</sup> If the vessel could have been set down in a corner of a football field with her stern on the goal line, her bow would barely have crossed the midfield stripe. She and a twin sister ship would have been comfortable side by side between the sideline and its hash mark.

While the ship herself was inert, the activity around and aboard her was abustle. Liverpool, at midcentury, was a hub of England’s maritime trade. Her docks were fed by an extensive network of railroads, stage roads, and canals. The flow of Latter-day Saint emigration had gathered considerable volume through the missionary work being conducted in western Europe, especially in the British Isles. Fawn M. Brodie declared, “In 1853 the Mormon missionary system in Great Britain was an astonishing force.”<sup>6</sup> In order for the yearly emigration to reach Great Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, before the snows of early winter blocked the highlands of Wyoming, the voyages across the North Atlantic had to begin in the dead of winter. Railroad lines converged at Liverpool Station

like the arteries of commerce which they were, disgorging passengers and their paraphernalia from the various “conferences” in England, then scurrying on their return trip. It must have been a very picturesque scene as the trains came smoking in, preceded by the shrill atonic warnings of the steam whistle, the audible signature ushered in by the age of steam, and chuffing to a standstill.

It was a time of excitement, eagerness, and mixed emotions, ranging from parting from friends, family, and lifelong attachments to village, town, or shire, to high anticipation in going to the new land, the new Zion, with her opportunities and new uncertainties ahead. Stowing luggage and other personal possessions, paying for passage, and getting berth assignments occupied the efforts of the passengers who were to embark on this voyage, and their agents. The Temperance Hotel at Number Three Manchester Street was a center of much of this activity.

In the interim before sailing, daily meetings were conducted at the Saints’ Chapel, where speakers from among the missionaries assigned to Perpetual Emigration Fund duty prepared the emigrants for the journey.<sup>7</sup> Warnings were frequently uttered against such evils as drinking brandy and falling into temptation along the way, especially in St. Louis.<sup>8</sup> A principal topic of the season was the doctrine of celestial marriage, which had been announced the previous August in Great Salt Lake City at a special early conference, called to launch 107 missionaries to worldwide fields of labor.<sup>9</sup> This was the first season to witness the ripple effect of that announcement in the lives of the emigrants now gathering in Liverpool. On 9 January, in the evening gathering at the chapel, Elder S. W. Richards

made some good remarks on the subject of Polygamy showing the wisdom of the Celestial Order and the evils of the present state of society followed by Elder Orson Spencer on the same subject in his usual plain and simple manner so that no one could gain say his word for he spoke by the Spirit. The house was crowded and sanctioned the address by a hearty Amen.<sup>10</sup>

The *Ellen Maria* had been scheduled for departure on 11 January, given fair wind. Stowing the ship continued on the tenth. As provisioning for the voyage proceeded, the ship settled ton by ton, inch by inch, until her keel drew nineteen feet of water. Ship carpenters were busily and noisily engaged in fitting out the steerage with additional bunk and baggage spaces for the voyage. Some of the converts, beginning to get the feel of the ship and their part in it, dined and slept on board for the first time. “The Saints were all merry and during the night some were singing and others joking. We slept several hours and rested well.”

The work continued on the eleventh and twelfth, arranging the assorted trunks, boxes, and other luggage and lashing them in place. Departure was delayed still another day. As frequently happened at Mersey Docks, the vessel then became windbound because of the

prevailing westerlies.<sup>11</sup> The Saints entertained themselves by playing music and dancing. These weather conditions lasted for several days. The people became restive. On the fourteenth, Elder Moses Clawson, in charge of the emigrants for this voyage, gave orders for the Saints to organize themselves in a company “for the time being so that prayers might be offered up morning and evening.” A watch bill for the men was drawn up for the night hours, and a cooking schedule was set up which divided that function into three shifts daily, each being allotted two hours at the stoves. Elder Clawson took the final step in organizing the Saints when he called upon the available elders to be responsible for looking after the health and well-being of their fellow passengers, grouping them according to assigned spaces.<sup>12</sup>

This occurred on 16 January. The voyage began on the following day at 4:00 P.M. As they left the dock, “All the Saints on Board were up on deck waving there hanchefes” as they sang, “Yes, My Native Land, I Love Thee” and “The Shepherds Have Raised Their Sweet Warning Voices.”<sup>13</sup> The vessel was warped from the dock and anchored half a mile downstream. The next morning, a steamer towed the *Ellen Maria* about sixteen miles into the Irish Sea, and the sails, after a few tentative puffs of air, flexed themselves for the first time and the wind took over for the duration of the voyage.

Initiation to the ways of the sea was not long in coming. High winds during the first night brought on general seasickness. The Welsh coast was sighted, but nobody seemed to care much about it. Nothing, however, can halt the beginnings of life. Sister Diggle gave birth to a baby girl in the afternoon of the twentieth, the first of five such occurrences on this voyage. Heavy weather continued. The Irish mountains passed quietly to starboard. Elder Clawson ordered gruel for the sick. He himself was probably the most susceptible person on board to *mal de mer*, as he reported later in his letter of 7 March to Samuel W. Richards, the Church agent in Liverpool: “I was, nearly the whole of the voyage, confined with sickness.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus the gallant little *Ellen Maria*, bearing her tight burden, sensitive to the forces that bound her, breasted the waves and the weather. Four days out, the diarist noted: “Fair wind and swift sailing. Passed every ship in sight. Most Beautiful night.” On the twenty-fourth they logged two hundred miles in twenty-four hours. Then the voyage became a trial. Stormy skies lay over their path, accompanied by the beat and roar of high winter winds, roughing the seas into mountainous and menacing threats to the safety of the vessel. Many of the elders met in the steerage and prayed for safety. High winds continued into the next day, the ship being tossed about like a cork. At the height of the storm, water got into the steerage, and the hatch had to be covered for a time. This left the passengers in darkness, breathing fetid air.

Nothing so intensifies our awareness of the passing moment as being caught up in the throes of nature on a rampage. As the *Ellen Maria* continued to struggle to keep from broaching and being swamped and swallowed whole by the moaning waters, the Saints and their possessions—the boxes and barrels, the satchels, trunks, and portmanteaus, every family treasure or trinket or tool they had brought for the new life—were being tossed or slammed about, the people rolling and skidding, banging into each other or coming up against the stanchions in such confusion as to defy description. There was no escape, no refuge, no retreat. Such a hectic, churning world was no fit place for a mother to bear her young. Maternity, however, chooses the time, not the place. In these extreme conditions, Sister Barnes gave birth to a baby boy. Mother and child both died during the night and were buried at sea the next day. Sewed into a counterpane, the bodies, following the rites of maritime commitment, were slipped into the water and tossed about for a while before slowly disappearing, a sobering sight to those on deck.

Provisions were given out on the twenty-eighth, the wind having lessened, the sea calm. Two marriages were performed on the thirtieth; sea and wind continued calm. Porpoises sporting in the water provided comic relief to the Saints between storms. Sister Kendall brought her baby girl into the world in the tight confinement of her quarters. The next night the wind blew a gale again, the ship making eight or nine knots, having logged two thousand miles in its first fortnight on the water. On 1 February, having passed the French coast and slipped between the Azores and the Spanish coast, the ship entered the Horse Latitudes, an east-west band of Atlantic water which stretches over two thousand miles along the thirtieth parallel of north latitude. It was a mainstream of travel, its easterly winds providing steady going when they weren't churning up a storm or dying down to a dead calm. The intervals between storm and calm, when the skies and wind were fair, were a veritable joyride, a cleansing of the body and the spirit, when the warmth of winter's sun was a balm to the skin, and the mind was free of the grip of fear. At such times *Ellen Maria* was a clipper ship, bearing her passengers along effortlessly, her sails rounded and taut, like matronly bosoms, filled with a benevolent and purposeful wind.

Sister Cornaby's autobiographical pen fills in some of the ocean's visual phenomena that entertained the Saints during these days:

The monster whale, now daily seen, sends forth a cloud of foam,  
And dolphins in their rainbow hues, quite near the vessel come.  
The flying fish amuse us, as in shoals they fly or leap,  
And seem at home in air above, or in the wat'ry deep;  
The nautilus spreads its little sail, and skims the briny wave,  
In praise to the Creator, who their various instincts gave.<sup>15</sup>

Routines clicked along within the confines of the ship, from morning bugle to evening prayer. Such minuscule housekeeping as was possible in the steerage was attended to along with the three daily cooking shifts at the stoves. The social chatter and gossip, the care of the sick, the singing and the meetings, the frequent preachings, the random strains of musical instruments to catch the ear, even dancing when conditions allowed, all filled the hours and buoyed the spirits. The calming influence of the elders' guiding hand on board was ever present. When the breeze fell off and the ship was becalmed, the heat became oppressive. After such an interval, on 3 February, the brethren prayed for a change of wind, which soon occurred. Provisions were again issued, favoring winds quickened the ship's pace, now up to ten knots, now thirteen. After prayers on 4 February, all hands cleaned under their berths. A sailor fell from a mast to the deck suffering severe lacerations, but no broken bones. Two days later, in response to the sounding of the bugle, the Saints gathered in the steerage at three o'clock in the afternoon for their first sacrament meeting since leaving England.<sup>16</sup> Heads were bowed as the words of the elder offering the prayer of blessing, along with the rustling of sails and the murmuring of waters brought by the fresh air from the hatchway, were heard, filling the Saints' hearts with peace and solemnity. Sister Diggle's baby girl was christened after the ship. Afterward, some of the Saints "took tea" together in a social gathering. The injured sailor was recovering and was able to take food.

The following day, 7 February, Sister Caroline Finn gave birth to a boy. The weather continued mild; in fact, it was now getting quite hot, the wind listless. When the wind freshened, some of the Saints were called upon to help make sail, and Elder Farmer was designated to see that the "places of convenience" were properly cleaned. On the eleventh, Brother Clawson was taken very sick. Sightings of traffic included a distress light at about 10:00 P.M., but the *Ellen Maria* could not get near. On the thirteenth, a vessel named *Coquet* approached and through a speaking trumpet requested provisions. It was eighty-five days out of England, bound for Charleston, South Carolina, and had experienced extended rough weather. The *Ellen Maria* had been out only twenty-seven days. The captain spared them two barrels of bread and one of pork.<sup>17</sup>

The weather turned cold the next day, and several of the passengers were ill. Those from Leicester, however, chose this occasion to host a social tea party. After evening prayers, the wind veered from the southeast and quickly picked up great force. Again, many feared for the safety of the vessel with following seas running very high, a most dreaded condition for the mariner. The storm raged, ripping some sails to shreds. The men turned to with the ship's company, hauling and pulling on the ropes to reef the sails. After the storm abated, the second mate remarked

that without the extra help, the ship and all in it “would have gone to hell.” Little four-year-old Albert Read, a victim of consumption, expired and was committed to the deep.

The wind continued fair, the weather very hot—typical Horse Latitudes sailing. On the fifteenth, diarist Farmer took his turn at the stoves. On the sixteenth, the wind picked up. Members of the Bradford conference entertained some of the elders at a tea party in the afterpart of the vessel. The following day, Brother Clawson arranged a dancing party on the quarterdeck, which lifted the spirits and eased the monotony. The course was now southwest by west, *Ellen Maria* making ten knots. On the afternoon of 18 February, a Friday, the ship was calculated at nine hundred miles from New Orleans, at a position  $27^{\circ}40'$  north latitude and  $72^{\circ}$  west longitude, approaching the Bahamas. Water restrictions were lifted by Captain Whitmore. Some of the Saints were ailing and were administered to by the elders.

Ushered by a fine morning breeze and morning, Sister Rebbeck delivered a baby boy on 19 February. High winds roughened the sea the rest of the day, and the rolling motion of the ship brought a return engagement with seasickness. Two sails were in sight most of the time. At nine that night volunteers were called up again to assist the ship’s crew in handling the vessel. After the men turned in, half a dozen berths broke down, “and to hear the cries and the screams of the sisters and the crash of the wind it was one scene of confusion.” A northwest wind mounted and raged for a while on the twentieth, causing heavy seas but abating in midafternoon. The sea was calm again on the twenty-first, and the Saints enjoyed another dance, lasting until 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday morning, 22 February, was sunny and warm. Several vessels were in sight now; fourteen sails were counted. At 10:11 they made the first landfall since leaving the coasts of Europe, the famous Hole-in-the-Wall at the tip of Great Abaco Island (Island of Abaque) and were thrilled at the sight of houses. As the ship rounded the tip at the Hole, entering the Northwest Providence Channel, a radical change in the weather occurred, the forerunner of a “black northern.” The steady mild easterlies fell off quite suddenly, the skies clouded over, and the temperature dropped sharply as an Arctic air mass from the northwest rushed in as if to fill a vacuum.<sup>18</sup> The ship was put about to ride out the storm, the amount of sail reduced to near zero, and the captain attempted to keep course in midchannel, away from the shallows of the Grand Bahama Bank.<sup>19</sup>

The morning of the twenty-third was a continuation of the wild weather of the night before. The call went out again for help on deck. The storm increased in intensity every hour; much of the canvas on the yardarms was ripped like paper. These were famous waters that were tossing the ship about. The Great Bahama Bank and the Little Bahama

Bank, between which they were buffeted, had been pirate havens a century before, due to the shallows and devious channels, which trapped and grounded pursuit.<sup>20</sup> Fear assailed the ship's company once more. They were now drifting over the Grand Bahama Bank, whose sandy bottom varied from six to thirty feet below the surface.<sup>21</sup> To the *Ellen Maria*, now out of the channel and out of control, this presented a grave danger. The ship was in the greatest peril of the voyage. All sails were furled. The anchors were dropped, which steadied the vessel somewhat, but the rolling effect of the high seas was intensified by the shallow water and uneven bottom. The Saints huddled in the steerage and prayed constantly for their safety.

On the morning of the twenty-fourth, at 4:00 A.M., one anchor broke loose and was dragging, which set the ship to swinging and rolling violently once more. The other anchor followed suit at six o'clock. Capsizing seemed imminent. Captain Whitmore took whatever desperate actions were necessary in attempting to avert disaster, but nothing served to restore the buoyancy of the vessel. The heavy seas and shallow draft combined to keep the ship at a dangerous angle. Prayers were fervent that morning. Sister Hannah Cornaby recounts this terrible moment in these words:

We know that there is danger, yet there's potency in prayer,  
And in this trying moment, ask our Heavenly Father's care;  
Our spirits feel its soothing power, and patiently we wait,  
The few brief moments, which we know must soon decide our fate.  
The captain, for a moment, comes inside the cabin door,  
And in his face we read a look we never saw before;  
He gazes on the passengers, but utters not a word,  
Yet plainly then we learn our fate, altho' no sound is heard;  
My husband now comes in; his face looks pale, but calm;  
He sits down close beside me, takes our babe upon his arm;  
Then seeks, with tender loving words to know if I'm aware,  
Unless Jehovah's power prevents, death must be very near.  
We tell each other of our hope, beyond the reach of death,  
Which will not fail us, even though we should resign our breath,  
And though, perhaps, all human power is impotent to save,  
Our trust is stayed on Him who can control the wind and wave.  
The wind is hushed, the danger past, oh, how the tidings come,  
To all who now expect to meet a sudden watery tomb!  
Life comes to us instead of death; joy takes the place of grief,  
But how describe the feeling of the wonderful relief?  
The vessel righted, now her course again can be controlled,  
And with the morning light the distant coast we can behold.<sup>22</sup>

Shortly afterward, the force of the storm was spent, and a fair wind restored navigation. As the skies cleared, the sails were loosed and filled, needed repairs or replacements effected, the anchors shipped, and by half past eight they were underway again as they slipped past the Bimini

Islands and entered the Florida Straits, fifty miles east of Miami. The captain could now employ "Bahamian pilotage" along the coast by keeping the blue water of the deep on his right and the green water of the shallows on his left.<sup>23</sup> The spectacular sunset that day was not lost on the Saints, as they were wafted along past a lighthouse and more land. Making ten knots in the sun the next morning quickened the pulses in the steerage: another landfall at 9:30—west Florida; land in sight all day. A wrecked vessel was sighted in the distance, having lost all of its masts and rigging. Since no distress signal was showing, the *Ellen Maria* passed by. The next morning, a sabbath, they sighted several sails as they entered the Gulf of Mexico. Elder Farmer and Elder Wadley celebrated by sporting about and dousing each other with salt water. The heading was northwest down the home stretch. Elder Clawson called a meeting on the quarterdeck at eleven. The Saints partook of the sacrament, and Elder Kendall spoke for an hour on the plurality of wives. Elder Clawson announced that he would give a lecture at seven o'clock that evening on the same subject. When the meeting convened, Elder Clawson spoke at great length. James Farmer noted, "With few exceptions the Saints appeared to be satisfied."

Monday the twenty-ninth found them "Sailing down the Gulph with a fair wind." About 5:00 P.M., a storm struck for an hour and a half, just to keep the Saints limbered up, and the various wards began taking inventory of their boxes and belongings preparatory to landing. By 1 March, several ships were in sight; at sundown they arrived at the Bar, the delta at the mouth of the Mississippi. The following day, many ships were in sight.<sup>24</sup> Several steamers were at work getting a ship off the sands. Death claimed its final victims for the voyage: little Jacob Broadhurst, two years old, and Sister Rebbeck, who left four small children. Both were interred.

On the morning of 3 March, two steamers, the *Ocean* and the *Hercules*, arrived at 4:30 to take *Ellen Maria* in tow. After churning up the waters for an hour and a half, they gave it up for the day. The following morning the steamers returned and with a fresh start got the ship under way, but rubbing bottom. If barnacles itch on the hull of a ship, *Ellen Maria* must have felt reborn at having them scraped from her bottom in this fashion. Brothers Welsh and Farmer went aboard the *Hercules* and bought some flour, plenty of oatmeal, and rice and biscuits. The *Ellen Maria* was towed as far as Pilot City, a way point along the 110 miles from the Bar to the port of New Orleans. Once she was anchored, the Saints rejoiced at seeing houses and trees and sensing the end of the long journey at sea. A doctor came aboard and examined the Saints; then a huckster came alongside with an oyster boat and did a good rushing business at twenty-four for a dollar. On the fifth, a fine morning again; it was cooking day. At 7:30, the *Anglo-Saxon* came alongside and took

the *Ellen Maria* and two other vessels in final tow up the delta. Beautiful plantation scenery on either side refreshed eyes weary of sun and sea. Brother Clawson advised, after prayers, that the Saints not go on deck, that many unfriendly people were on the vessels accompanying them. A watch was set for the men that night.

Sunday, 6 March, meeting was conducted on the quarterdeck at eleven o'clock. Baby Finn was blessed. The lush, subtropical scenery continued to captivate the interest of all. They landed at New Orleans at two o'clock in the morning on 7 March, the forty-seventh day out of Liverpool.

Thus did the voyage of the ship *Ellen Maria* finally come to its end. The larger story, of course, concerns the adventures of the passengers in the vessel. The conclusion of their journeys, most of which began in various parts of England, occurred some months afterward, on 11 October, when they trudged from the mouth of Emigration Canyon as the Cyrus Wheelock Company and were welcomed with customary congratulations by Brigham Young. The interval between arriving in New Orleans and leaving Keokuk, Iowa, on 1 June was spent in traveling, in smaller groups, at different times, by riverboat twelve hundred miles up the Mississippi to St. Louis, the first staging point. The second leg was made up several riverboat trips on up the Mississippi to Keokuk, which was the final staging area for the overland companies along the Mormon Trail in 1853. The several weeks between 7 March and 1 June were devoted to working in St. Louis or nearby for some, usually the men. But the spiritual bond which had been established in the beginning, and which was the reason for the journeying, was nurtured on a continuing basis with religious services and recreational activities which began aboard ship. The main effort during these weeks was the procurement of the livestock and paraphernalia essential to making up and equipping the several companies being organized for the journey. That in itself is another story among the many which were lived out during the years of the gathering, especially those before the iron horse entered the scene during the late 1860s.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>James Farmer, Diary, 8 January 1853, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). The chronology of the voyage is derived mainly from this source. Unless otherwise attributed, quotations throughout the narrative are taken from James Farmer's diary.

<sup>2</sup>Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830-1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 49.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>5</sup>Telephone conversation with Nathan Lipfert, Assistant Curator, Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, Maine, June 1984.

<sup>6</sup>Frederick Hawkins Piercy, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, ed. Fawn M. Brodie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), xiii.

<sup>7</sup>Farmer, Diary, 9 January 1853; Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*, 31.

<sup>8</sup>Farmer, Diary, 9 January 1853.

<sup>9</sup>"Minutes of a Special Conference of the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Assembled in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Aug. 28–29, 1852," *Deseret News*, 18 September 1852.

<sup>10</sup>Farmer, Diary, 9 January 1853.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Square Riggers on Schedule* (1905; reprint, Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1965), 237.

<sup>12</sup>By 1853, Mormon shipboard organization was well recognized for its effectiveness. As a rule, members were assigned to several groups, or wards, each with a leader, and given detailed instructions aimed at orderliness of quarters, cleanliness of person and of food preparation, protection of the women from abuse and disturbance, and regularity of cockcrow and curfew, all of which relieved much of the monotony and resulted in better health and spirits during the weeks at sea. A good summary of this program of self-government is given in Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*, 76–77, for the ship *Jersey*.

<sup>13</sup>John Isaac Hart, Diary, LDS Church Archives; Farmer, Diary, 17 January 1853.

<sup>14</sup>Moses Clawson to S. W. Richards, on arrival of the *Ellen Maria* at New Orleans, *Millennial Star* 15 (16 April 1853): 253.

<sup>15</sup>Hannah Cornaby, *Autobiography and Poems* (Salt Lake City: J. C. Graham and Co., 1881), 73.

<sup>16</sup>Farmer, Diary, 6 February 1853.

<sup>17</sup>Hannah Cornaby, recalling this event later (*Autobiography*, 74), wrote that "She was from Charleston, outward bound." James Farmer's version was accepted here as having been recorded at the time.

<sup>18</sup>For an account of weather conditions in the region, see Carleton Mitchell and B. Anthony Stewart, "The Bahamas, Isles of the Blue–Green Sea," *National Geographic* 113 (February 1958): 147–203, especially 159.

<sup>19</sup>For orientation, see National Geographic Society map, "Close-Up USA: Florida," 1973.

<sup>20</sup>Mitchell and Stewart, "The Bahamas," 147.

<sup>21</sup>Farmer reported five fathoms. John Isaac Hart, apparently referring to this same hazard, said, "at night we got into a very Dangers place we have only 1 foot and a half of water under the bottom of the vessel."

<sup>22</sup>Cornaby, *Autobiography*, 76–77.

<sup>23</sup>See Mitchell and Stewart, "The Bahamas," 153.

<sup>24</sup>A few days later, on 14 March, Elder Appleton W. Harmon, passenger on the *Golgotha*, counted fifty-one sails at anchor off the Bar (Appleton W. Harmon, Diary, 14 March 1853, LDS Church Archives).

# Mormon Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain

Leonard J. Arrington

We may begin with a typical story<sup>1</sup>—the story of Esther Ogden, who was born in 1839 in Staley Bridge, Lancashire. Her mother and father were proprietors of the Angel Inn at Mottram, Cheshire. One day, when she was about nine, Mormon missionaries came to the inn for lodging and food. Noting the large reception room, they asked if they might hold a meeting there. The Ogdens told them they might if they were orderly and did nothing disreputable. Esther wrote of the subsequent meeting as follows:

The missionaries held their meeting, and as our family had their quarters at the Inn, we could not help but hear the singing. My mother was so enchanted by the opening song that she crept down the hall where she could hear better. After the singing, one of the missionaries gave the prayer. [Mother] could stand it no longer, and returned to tell father and us children that she had never heard such singing or such a sincere prayer. From then on the missionaries were constant visitors and all of our family were baptized into the Church in 1848.<sup>2</sup>

Five years later, that is, when Esther was fourteen, the Ogdens migrated to America, settled in Kaysville, Utah, north of Salt Lake City, and when she was a little older, Esther married William Bosworth, another English immigrant, and they had twelve children. Esther finally died at age eighty-two after a lifetime of caring for her children, sewing dresses and baby jackets, and managing her husband's farm after his death of sunstroke.

Esther's Englishness came out in many ways. When she was seventy-seven, according to her daughter she suffered from a stroke and never regained the use of her right arm and only partial use of her right leg. She was never able to speak again, her daughter wrote, except when she was very angry. The paralysis made it hard for her to eat solid foods, so she had eggnogs made with tea three times a day. Her granddaughter describes an incident:

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Leonard J. Arrington is Lemuel Redd professor of western history emeritus at Brigham Young University. He is coauthor, with Susan Madsen, of *Mothers of the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987).

Mother thought tea three times a day was not good for her and was telling me she thought she should flavor the eggnog tea with vanilla instead of tea. The conversation took place in the pantry and Grandma, who was supposed to be rather hard of hearing, was in the dining room. But she heard this, and if you ever heard an angry lady who couldn't speak trying to protest, that was it. She was very indignant that anyone was plotting to do her out of her tea.<sup>3</sup>

This comes from the personal history of Esther, written for her children shortly before her stroke, and with an appendix written by her daughter and granddaughter afterward. It is one of several hundred personal histories and autobiographies in the Church archives in Salt Lake City.<sup>4</sup>

In the two hundred or more diaries and personal histories of the Latter-day Saint women who lived at least several years in Britain before their migration to the United States or Canada very few said much about their life in Britain. Most of them began their life stories by saying, "I was born at such and such a place; my parents were so and so; we were introduced to Mormonism by the elders in such and such a year, and we decided to gather with the Saints shortly thereafter." At that point they then tell in great detail about the voyage across the ocean, the landing at New Orleans, the trip up the Mississippi by riverboat, and life for a few months in St. Louis or Florence, Nebraska, the frontier outfitting point. The narrative proceeds with comments about the trek across the Great Plains, their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, their early homes, how they made a living in Utah, their activities and experiences in the Church, and so on to the end of their lives.

Clearly, the important thing to all of these people was how they happened to hear the missionaries, how they came to be impressed with the gospel, and their baptism—which often occurred very quickly after first hearing the gospel message—sometimes within a day or week after first hearing the elders. It is almost as if they were already converted to the message the elders brought, and when they heard it preached they quickly recognized it and were ready to make their covenants. Hardly any of the personal histories say very much about their lives as children and young women in Britain.

Nevertheless, what we can learn is important. A substantial proportion of the early Latter-day Saints in the American West were of direct British origin. If we exclude the American Indians, about 70 percent of the adults in Utah in the last half of the nineteenth century were born in Europe. About two-thirds of these were British, and about one-third Scandinavian. So the influence of the British in LDS history in the nineteenth century was clearly very important. The third president of the Church, John Taylor, was born in Westmorland County, England; the sixth president of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, was born of a British mother who came from Bedfordshire; the ninth president,

David O. McKay, was born of British parents, his father from Scotland and his mother from Wales. George Q. Cannon, first counselor under four presidents of the Church, was a Liverpudlian; John R. Winder, first counselor under President Joseph F. Smith, was born in Kent; Charles W. Penrose, second counselor to President Smith and first counselor to President Heber J. Grant, was born in London; Charles W. Nibley, second counselor to President Grant, was born in Midlothian, Scotland; and Britishers who served as Apostles of the Church include: John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, George Teasdale, Charles W. Penrose, James E. Talmage, and Charles A. Callis. Many others had British wives or mothers. And, of course, there were many presidents of the Seventies, stake presidents, bishops, and stake patriarchs that were British.

British women were also prominent in Church leadership. Many British women served in the general presidencies of the Primary, the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association, and the Relief Society of the Church. May Anderson, born and baptized in Liverpool, was editor of *The Children's Friend*, the Church's magazine for Primary children, and was secretary of the first general presidency of the Primary. She was later sustained as a counselor to the first president, Louie Felt, and became the general president after Sister Felt's death, serving from 1925 to 1939. Matilda Morehouse Barratt, a native of Cheshire, was also a counselor to the first general president of the Primary, and she was sufficiently respected that one of the original buildings of the LDS University in Salt Lake City was called Barratt Hall. Four other British women were members of the Primary General Board in the nineteenth century: Eliza Bennion, Euphemia Irvine, Alice Taylor Sheets, and Eleanor Thomas Bromley.

In the Young Women's organization, Ruth May Fox, born in Wiltshire, was a counselor to Martha Tingey, second general president of the Young Women, and then became president herself, serving from 1929 to 1937. British women serving on the Young Women's General Board included Emma J. Nield Goddard, born in Lancashire—and she served on the board thirty-seven years; Elizabeth Ann Claridge McCune, born in Bedfordshire; and Nellie Colebrook Taylor, born in Cheltenham.

In the Relief Society, eight British women served on the general board in the nineteenth century: Harriet Bunting, born in Norfolk; Emma Adams Empey, born at Staffordshire; Elizabeth Howard, born in Carlow County, Ireland; Priscilla Paul Jennings, born in Cornwall; Mary Mitchell Pitchforth, born at Hertfordshire; Rebecca Standring, born in Northampton; Elizabeth DuFresne Stevenson, born at St. Helier, Jersey; and Carrie Thomas, born at Plymouth.

And of course there were literally hundreds of British women who were presidents of ward, stake, branch, and mission Relief Societies, Young Women's, and Primary organizations both in Great Britain and

elsewhere, and in those days many Sunday School presidents and counselors.

Perhaps the most energetic of the early converts who remained in Britain was Ann Sophia Jones Rosser. She had been born in Raglan, Monmouthshire, in 1834. She was baptized when she was seventeen, married at nineteen, and served for the next sixty years as a kind of permanent missionary in South Wales and Bristol. Indeed, she was probably the first LDS woman missionary in Great Britain. Over the years she distributed thousands of tracts; sold hundreds of Books of Mormon; distributed meeting notices; sang at open air meetings; is credited with having converted scores of persons; assisted people who needed help to migrate to the Great Basin; nursed many people during epidemics of cholera, influenza, and other diseases; and entertained several hundred elders, including five presidents of the Church: John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and Heber J. Grant. As Relief Society president she helped organize women in her conference to relieve distress during World War I, making clothing to send to the front, visiting hospitals, and doing other compassionate and patriotic service.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the impact of the British on LDS culture was profound. Britishers furnished many of our poets, sculptors, painters, musicians, playwrights, and actors. The two hymns most sung by Latter-day Saints were composed by Britons: "Come, Come, Ye Saints," composed by William Clayton, of Lancashire; and "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" by William Fowler, a resident of Yorkshire. Nearly all the sermons delivered in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City in the 1850s and 1860s were reported by George D. Watt of Manchester, who once lived in the poorhouse and who proved to be the first person baptized in the Church in Britain.

In reading the diaries and life histories one is struck with several important differences between nineteenth-century Britain and life there today.

First, in the nineteenth century the death rate was much higher than in this century. Thus, a large proportion of the girls growing up in Britain suffered because of the early death of one or both parents. For the young women, the death of a parent meant not only loss and grief, but also changes in school, home, work, and friendship. Many of them were brought up by a single parent or by a second father or mother, an uncle or aunt, or by foster parents. Some spent years in the poorhouse.

For a similar reason, many of the girls suffered through the deaths of little brothers or sisters or neighborhood playmates. A heavy proportion of all the babies died before they were one year of age, and of those who survived infancy, about one-fourth died before they reached sixteen. So death was an ever-present reality. The girls and young

women, and older women as well, inevitably went through long sieges of illness: smallpox, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, typhus, diphtheria, mumps, whooping cough, and measles.

A second difference is that nineteenth-century girls grew up in larger families than we have today. Many of them grew up in families with ten or eleven or twelve children, and in these diaries there were at least two families with sixteen children. This presented certain problems for the children as well as for the mothers and fathers.

A third difference is that nineteenth-century Britain was marked by greater class distinctions than today, and many, if not most, came from what were called "the lower classes." Some wrote of their family having a bowl of oatmeal and water as their only sustenance for days on end; of living on a glass of water and two penny loaves per day. Some women reported that they were able to enjoy meat and potato pie only on Sundays. In most families, the father, mother, and children worked fourteen hours a day.

The poverty no doubt increased their eagerness to migrate, and the Church did its best to help them by encouraging them to save a little each week; by organizing emigrating parties, renting ships, and paying their passage with funds donated by members in America; and by encouraging the more well-to-do members in Britain to help others migrate. The few wealthy converts generously shared their means with poorer members and with the Church officials, making possible the publication of the Book of Mormon, the *Millennial Star*, and thousands of tracts and pamphlets.

With respect to education, most of the girls did well to learn to read, write, and do simple arithmetic. Sometimes they learned this in Sunday School, since day school was often an impossibility. Many of them did not read any book but the Bible by the time they were grown. There were some instances in which children were prohibited from going to school because their parents had become Mormons. But we must not emphasize this point too strongly—there were a number of highly educated converts, and their contributions to the Church were noteworthy.

Because of the poverty of their families, if they had one, the girls worked from a very early age—in factories, in mines, or, more commonly, as servants in guest houses, inns, schools, or in the homes of the more well-to-do. They prepared food, engaged in spinning and weaving, did farm labor, and performed other tasks that would furnish them a living and a little spending money. Their work was hard; their hours were long; and their living quarters were usually small and poorly ventilated. In the case of a good many, they, or their fathers or mothers, or all three, were fired when their employer heard they had joined the Church, not so much because the employer objected, but because other employees would not work alongside them. On the other hand, their

church affiliation often brought the only respite from a life of misery and toil. The Sunday School, Young Women's groups, and Relief Societies were often a means of helping them develop themselves so they could move out of their poverty into a condition that made life bearable, even happy.

There were organizations of women Latter-day Saints in Britain, even in the 1840s, shortly after the first Relief Society was organized in Nauvoo in 1842. According to documents in the Church archives there were some female societies in 1843, 1844, 1845, and later years. One of their programs was to get the women to donate one penny per week to the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. The names of those who contributed were carefully recorded, together with the amount, and placed in the Book of the Law of the Lord, which is today in the First Presidency's vault in Salt Lake City. The first formally organized Relief Society in Britain was the Nottingham Branch in 1873. Others were soon organized in other branches. The Church archives has an 1870s and 1880s minute book for the Glasgow Conference Relief Society.

The leadership which they soon demonstrated, both in England and America, suggests the wonderful potential that existed among these people. Despite their origins in a "class" society, with its traditional and legal obstacles to opportunity and advancement, there was a mushrooming growth of talent and leadership ability after their baptisms. People who, under traditional institutions, would likely have been humble miners, clerks, tenant farmers, and domestics all their lives became, through time, conference presidents, bishops, Relief Society presidents, leading businessmen, mayors of cities, and even members of Parliament and United States Senators. The talent and intelligence was there all the time—it was like the bursting of a seam, the opening of a sealed bottle, the unlocking of a door. That was what Mormonism meant to many of these people. And it was occurring in Britain well before they migrated to America. The gospel suddenly gave people hope and determination, new associations, and standards to live by that affected not only their status in the next life but in this life as well. Abilities which they were not even aware that they possessed suddenly surfaced. In his book, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, Charles Dickens tells of his visits to a group of Latter-day Saints embarking at Liverpool. He was impressed with their industry, cleanliness, and orderliness. He called them the pick and flower of England.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, a comment about the reason for their conversion. It is evident that the religions of the day were not satisfying all of the English people, although most of them were moral, read the Bible, believed devoutly in the teachings of Jesus, and prayed earnestly. Their diaries and personal histories tell of their discontent, and the discontent of their husbands and parents, with existing churches, whether Church of

England or Non-Conformist. The pastors, they wrote, were educated in classical literature (Greek and Roman), were sometimes more interested in books than in parishioners, and often felt themselves in a higher class status. Their sermons were reported to be more literary than substantive, often bearing no connection with the personal and family problems of the members. And the doctrines they preached did not always appeal. The God they described was incomprehensible, incorporeal, and inscrutable. Unbaptized infants were condemned to hell. Men and women were creations of God but not children of God. And the human spirit or soul did not exist prior to conception or birth. The diaries and reminiscences of early LDS women expressed their disappointment, as teenagers, with the predominant religious belief in the natural or innate sinfulness of people because of the sin of Adam and Eve.

Dissatisfied with institutional religion, a few people, especially the men, did not regularly associate with church, and occasionally formed little groups to study the Bible, advocate its precepts, and exercise the gifts of heaven. But even these did not satisfy them.

What was it about the LDS message that appealed to them? First, the man-to-man approach of the lay Mormon missionaries, with their humbly-expressed, sincerely-felt messages. Second, their belief that the Mormons were more biblically oriented and that the prophecies, calls to repentance, and requirements for salvation that they took from the Bible were valid and binding. They were particularly impressed by the LDS view that God is a Person, a Heavenly Father; that men and women have a divine potential. As Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, they were persuaded that the new church had all the proofs of apostolic power; it would survive the doom that would soon fall upon the unredeemed world. It would rescue from that destruction all who accepted the true gospel, and this in a quite literal way by organizing their migration to a place of safety, peace, and divine order. As with other pastors and ministers, Mormon elders exhorted their listeners to follow the Christian moral code, to pray, to bring up children in the fear of God, and so on. But the restored Church was unique because it had a special authority and a new conception of the kingdom of God.

There are some final observations about the differences between these convert-immigrants from Britain and women converts from America or from the Continent. By and large, the British women were less submissive, more spunky, more willing to stand up and assert themselves than American women. One Welsh woman, nearly seventy, walked forty-two miles to attend a conference at Merthyr Tydfil in 1845.

They were also surprisingly articulate, even the uneducated ones. They were more expressive than the average American LDS convert,

more apt to write letters and diaries. They were also very candid. In their diaries and letters they did not hold back on their complaints and occasional grumbles.

Third, they tended to be politically active. They were insistent on defending their rights, indignant at the slurs of their anti-Mormon enemies, and less passive in overlooking unfair treatment. One gets the impression that the majority of the LDS women working to improve the status of women in the United States were immigrants from Britain. They seemed to recall their British heritage with pride, especially the protection of civil rights, which many felt was honored more in England than in the United States.

Fourth, and unforgettably, although they migrated willingly, even ardently, they still missed their homeland. Many of them found they could express their feelings of nostalgia and longing only in poetry. In such handwritten poems, some of them really very good, there is frequent mention of the flowers, trees, and birds of the villages where they grew up and lived. Scots, for example, frequently mention how they missed the hawthorn tree, a tree associated with the songs of Robert Burns and having an almost sacred connotation for Scots. Despite their tender feelings toward their homeland, however, none of them expressed regret for joining the Church, for migrating, or for the adjustments they had to make in the new land. As one person wrote: "Could I begin it again with my present light and knowledge and present feeling, and with a noble and beloved being to stand by my head, I would rejoice to go through much for the kingdom of God."<sup>8</sup>

In short, the LDS women in nineteenth-century Britain were highly praiseworthy people. Their British value system, as reinforced by the gospel and their personal righteousness, gave them an aura of blessedness, of working to build the kingdom of God.

Let me conclude the paper with representative biographies of three women whose stories illustrate the strength of the spirit among LDS converts, the hand of the Lord in some of their conversions, and the problems they faced as they sought to live the standards and admonitions of the Gospel.

#### RUTH MAY (FOX)

Ruth May was born in 1853 in Westbury, Wiltshire.<sup>9</sup> Her father was a miner and factory worker of very little schooling, but he loved to read the Bible and had a good memory. Her mother, also not well-schooled, was of a religious nature, and there were ministers in her family. When Ruth was just a baby, her parents were baptized members of the Church. Shortly thereafter, when Ruth was only sixteen months old, her mother died of childbirth complications. Her father, who was active in the local

branch of the Church and wanted Ruth to grow up as a Latter-day Saint, had difficulty finding someone sympathetic to the Church to take care of her. Sometimes Ruth lived with relatives, sometimes with friends. She lived in seven different homes before she was eight. For one brief period she lived with her grandmother May, who lived in Bradford, on the Avon. Ruth always remembered the lovely swans floating on the river, and the great, broad fields of buttercups, daisies, primroses, and cowslips. Once she was sent upstairs carrying a candle in her hand, and the first thing she knew she was running to the top of the stairs, screaming: "Grandmother, my head is on fire." Grandmother ran quickly upstairs and extinguished Ruth's blazing hair with her bare hands. From that time on, one side of Ruth's hair was always more difficult to manage than the other.

Of course Ruth was sent to school, where she was apparently a little rambunctious. Nevertheless, the most enduring memory was learning a song about Jesus:

I think when I read that sweet story of old,  
When Jesus was here among men,  
How he called little children like lambs to his fold,  
I should like to have been with him then.

I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,  
That his arms had been thrown around me,  
That I might have seen his kind look when he said,  
"Let the little ones come unto me."

Yet still to his footstool in prayer I may go,  
And ask for a share in his love;  
And if I thus earnestly seek him below,  
I shall see him and hear him above.<sup>10</sup>

Ruth May wrote of her sense of pride as a child. Her father, she was proud to tell children of the neighborhood, was a gentleman. This was evidenced by the fact that when he came to visit her he was usually dressed in his Sunday best, which meant a silk hat, patent leather shoes, and perhaps a cane. And if he was thus so obviously a gentleman, people should curtsy as they passed him.

When she was eight, her father decided she was old enough for him to become her guardian and teacher of manners. So he took her to Yorkshire, where he worked, which was about two hundred miles from Wiltshire. There they boarded with a Mrs. Saxton, a Latter-day Saint who had a daughter Clara almost the same age as Ruth. Ruth and Clara became fast friends. Lacking a nearby LDS branch, they went together to Church of England Sunday School and each week, with the father's approval, committed to memory pages from an instruction book and used one of their prayer books.

Ruth and Clara had many tasks to perform besides schoolwork—they carried lunch to her father and carried water and groceries to the

Saxton home. By the time she was ten Ruth had learned to carry a bucket of water or a stone of flour (fourteen pounds, British) on her head. But she most enjoyed what she called “doing pieces”—reciting poems and stories—in the grocery shop, at socials attended by the minister, and on Sunday School outings. She was now old enough to attend community celebrations, the first of which for her was Guy Fawkes Day. By putting in a half penny, people would gather in groups, build bonfires, and have what she called “jollification.”

All was not play, of course. Ruth was taught to sew, knit, and crochet. Most of her evenings were spent making knots of black thread by the light of a small candle. The laws of England used to permit children to work in the factories when eight years old. But in Ruth’s day, children could only work a half-day until they were thirteen. Ruth wanted to do this, but her father, contemplating the trip to America, would not grant his permission. Instead, she washed dishes, scrubbed and scoured the stone floors, and polished the furniture. Sometimes she and Clara went into the broad, green fields to gather blackberries from the hedges bordering the fields. After a rain the mushrooms were thick, and the girls filled their little pails with them. Sometimes they gathered nettles to make beer with and went home with many stings. Thus they had a chance to wander in the green lanes for which England is so famous.

Once Ruth and Clara went with Mrs. Saxton to visit some of the Saxton relatives in Armley, a little city near Leeds. They went to what Ruth called the most wonderful party she had ever attended, where they had great, crystal bowls overflowing with oranges, apples, grapes, and other fruits. As the lady passed the fruit around a second time, Ruth automatically said, “No, thank you,” because that was how she had been trained. But when she saw others eating, she went to the bowl and helped herself. This was something that was not done. Ruth reports, “A nice lady came and told me, ‘That was naughty. You should never help yourself.’ ”

On one of these trips she stayed all night and next morning was given two pence half penny for train fare. “But as I wanted to keep my money,” wrote Ruth, “I walked home—a distance of seven miles.” It was a lovely road, she said, but she hadn’t realized how dangerous it might have been.

Finally, in 1865, when she was twelve, her father was ready to go to the promised land. Her father would also emigrate Mrs. Saxton and Clara. He would marry Mrs. Saxton after they reached America, and Clara would now be in actual fact Ruth’s sister. After three weeks they landed at Castle Gardens, then went to Philadelphia, where Ruth’s father married Clara’s mother. The girls worked in a cotton mill for a while and then worked as domestics in nearby homes.

They crossed the Great Plains in 1867 and settled in Parley’s Canyon, east of Salt Lake City. Her father worked at Brigham Young’s

woolen mill, and Ruth in a nearby cotton factory; they later worked in a factory in Ogden. Ruth later married Jesse W. Fox, Jr., and they had a large family, some of whom are still alive.

Ruth began working in the Church's YWMIA office in 1914 and worked there until retiring in 1937. Her husband died in 1928. She was active in politics—one of the organizers of the Republican party in Utah, auditor of the National Council for Women, treasurer of the Utah Woman Suffrage Association, member of the board of the Deseret Agriculture and Manufacturing Society. Her Church responsibilities included: counselor in ward primary; president of the ward YWMIA; member of the YWMIA General Board; first counselor to general president, YWMIA, 1905–29; and general president of the Young Women, 1929–37. She wrote the poem “Carry On,” which was set to music for the Church centennial in 1930. She visited England for the centennial of the British Mission in 1937, and lived until 1958—almost 105 years. She was a resourceful, witty, and hardworking product of Britain.

#### PATIENCE LOADER (ROZSA, ARCHER)

Patience Loader was already twenty-eight when she left England, so her personal history has a lot to say about her life there before she left.<sup>11</sup> She was born in 1827 at Aston Rowant, Oxfordshire, the fourth in a family of thirteen, four boys and nine girls. Her parents lived on the estate of Sir Henry Lambert, her father being the head gardener. It was a beautiful place, with flowers, trees, water, and lovely playgrounds. Her father had a home and plot of ground for his own family, and he was able to give each child a spot of ground to plant whatever they wanted. They had everything in the yard for their amusement, so they spent nearly all their time on their own property. On Sunday they attended Sunday School and worship at a Church of England chapel. They were taught to pray. Patience had a happy childhood.

At the age of seventeen, Patience thought she should go out to earn her own support, so she went to a nearby village and worked for one year, receiving a salary of one pound and ten shillings for the entire year. She took time for a brief visit home after the year, and then went to London, where she worked as a housekeeper, seamstress, and later as chambermaid at a hotel.

While in London she heard about the Mormons. Indeed, a friend of hers told Patience that her parents (Patience's parents) had joined the Church, but Patience could not believe it, so she wrote home, saying, “I suppose they [the Mormons] think they are better than other people, as they call themselves Saints.” She went home for a visit and while there was converted and baptized. When she returned to her work in London, she converted two of her girlfriends, but people jeered at her and she was

finally discharged from employment. She finally got work looking after the invalid wife of General William Turner. After Mrs. Turner's death, Patience stayed at the General's home to look after him. But when her parents decided to emigrate to America in 1855, the General thought it was proper for her to go with them and so, in December 1855, after eleven years in London, she and her parents, three sisters, and two brothers and their families departed from Liverpool. Two other sisters were to leave the following summer with their families, and one sister had left a year earlier and now lived in Springville, Utah. Two brothers and two sisters remained in England and did not join the Church.

The Loaders were eleven weeks on board the *John Boyd* and had the usual storms and tossings. On one fearful occasion Patience beheld a vision of the Savior, who spoke to her saying, "Fear not. You shall be taken over safely." After that, although one of her nieces died during the crossing, Patience had no anxiety.

They arrived in New York City in February 1856 and obtained employment. Patience worked in a coat factory. After several weeks the Loaders went on to Nebraska to join a handcart company. Their experience in the handcart crossings was not pleasant because of an early snowfall, but they were the beneficiaries of a massive rescue effort by Saints from Salt Lake City. They arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on 30 November 1856, almost a year after leaving Liverpool.

In Utah, Patience married John Rozsa, a United States soldier who had joined the Church. When John was assigned to go to Washington, D.C., on the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, Patience, who by now had a baby girl, went with him. There she cooked for a group of soldiers. At the end of the war, in 1866, her husband, who by now had heart and lung trouble, took his little family and headed west. Unfortunately, he died on the way, at Fort Kearney, Nebraska. As Patience, now a widow, headed on for Utah with her three boys, some Indians came to camp. She was told by the captain not to give them anything, but she had been used to giving them food when she lived in Utah, so she gave them some anyway. The Indians said, "Where's your man?" Patience said, "Gone." The Indian patted her on the shoulder and asked, "Mormon squaw?" She replied, "Yes." He said, "Good squaws, Mormons."

Patience worked in mining camps as a cook and after ten years remarried, this time to John Archer. She enjoyed life with her children; they enjoyed parties and dances, always had refreshments which she furnished—popcorn, molasses candy, doughnuts, and apples. She was active in the local ward as a teacher, Relief Society president, Primary, YMMIA, and Sunday School officer. A woman of strong faith, she had many spiritual experiences. She learned to play the organ after she was eighty. She finally died in Pleasant Grove, Utah, in 1921, at the age of 94.

She left a fine posterity, and one of her grandsons was recently president of the Los Angeles Temple.

MARY ANN WESTON (MAUGHAN)

Mary Ann Weston was born in the parish of Corse, near Corse Hills, Gloucestershire.<sup>12</sup> Her father, who had been born in Worcestershire, was a watch and clockmaker and also a grower of herbs. Both of Mary Ann's parents were from substantial, middle-class families, what Mary Ann called "the high gentry." They were "tall fine looking people," she wrote, and prominent in their church and in local business circles. Mary Ann grew up knowing and being treated kindly by local tradespeople, the parson, and farmers. Her father was a leading member of the Wesleyan Methodists at Corse Lawn, and led the congregational singing.

Mary Ann attended Wesleyan Sunday School regularly and became a teacher when she was fifteen. They had their own prayer meetings Monday evenings and were sincere in trying to live the religion they professed.

Mary Ann had many memories of her childhood, telling us much about England in 1830. There was the neighborhood friend who came down with typhus and had the quarantine placed on her house. The mother subsequently died, leaving behind eight children. There was the neighboring carpenter who stole the Weston's gate and was caught carrying it to his home. There was the neighboring farmer who lost a large flock of young geese, and the person taking them left a note tied on the neck of an old gander left behind, thanking the owner for the booty and expressing confidence that he could duplicate the trick the next year. The police thought leaving the note was too impudent, so they investigated and decided that the guilty party was a family normally regarded as "very pious," living not far away, who held worship services for their faith in their home every Sunday. When the police went one Sunday afternoon with a search warrant, they sat quietly with the congregation until the service was concluded, then arrested the father and son and found in one of the rooms all the missing ducks and chickens dressed for market.

It is clear from her history of living in their country home that their days and evenings were full—driving to the store in Cheltenham (it took two hours by horse and buggy), driving to Leedsbury to buy, and so on. When her mother went to work, Mary Ann stayed home to care for the children, for she would not leave them with the servants. On other days Mary Ann went with her father or with her brothers.

In the year of 1837–38, when she was twenty, Mary Ann went to live with a friend of hers in Leigh in Lancashire to learn dressmaking and millinery. She stayed a year, was treated well, and found the training very helpful to her in the years that followed.

In the spring of 1840, when Mary Ann was twenty-three, William Jenkins, who had married the girl Mary Ann learned dressmaking from, was visiting some friends in Herefordshire and happened to hear Wilford Woodruff preach. He was impressed, heard additional sermons, and was baptized. Upon his return he told his wife and Mary Ann about the new gospel and they soon invited Elder Woodruff to their home. Mary Ann was the only one in the house when he came. Mary Ann wrote:

He sat by the fire and soon commenced singing: "Shall I for fear of feeble man, the Spirit's course in me restrain." Brother Jenkins had told us that he [Mr. Woodruff] had left his home in America, crossed the sea, and came to preach this Gospel to the people of England. While he was singing, I looked at him. He looked so peaceful and happy, I thought he must be a good man, and the Gospel he preached must be true. There was a small society of United Brethren in this place. I think they all joined the Church and emigrated to Nauvoo.

Mary Ann goes on:

Soon as the people were baptised, the persecution comenced. One Sunday afternoon while some were being baptised, a man threw a dog in the pond, saying he would baptise the *dog*. There was a man standing near me that had walked 8 or 10 miles that morning to be baptised. He had a bundle of clothes in his hand. I saw a man from the other side of the pool come up to him and asked to borrow the clothes. They were willingly lent. The man went away, put them on, was baptised, and returned them; and Brother Ruck carried them home wet. He afterwards joined the Church and we have laughed about his carrying his clothes so many miles and not using them. Brother Woodruff baptised Mrs. Hill, Hannah Simonds (now M. Phillips of Kaysville), and myself at midnight in the pond in the centre of the Village. We could not be baptised in the daytime on account of persecution.

The next summer and winter, having finished her apprenticeship, Mary Ann went back to her family and, as before she went away, she worked for her father in his traveling and also did some business of her own, sewing for her family and for others. She did much of the housework.

Her family did not obey the gospel, but they did not oppose Mary Ann. She attended all the meetings she could, often walking many miles alone to and from them. One shipload of Saints had gone to Nauvoo from Gloucester, and another was about to leave. She says she attended a tea meeting at Dymock near Leedsbury on 18 May 1840, which was a Monday. There she saw a brother John Davis of Tirely, Gloucestershire (nearby) baptized and then, on the bank of the pond where they were baptizing, ordained a priest. Mary Ann became engaged to him. He was a cooper and carpenter by trade. They were married on Joseph Smith's birthday, 23 December 1840, in Gloucester by a clergyman of the Church of England. They went to Tirely to live and were very happy. They were visited by Elder Woodruff, Willard Richards, and other elders, who held

many meetings in their home. They were frequently disturbed by anti-Mormon mobs. On one such occasion the mob attacked Mary Ann's husband, knocked him down, and kicked him; he was bruised internally, and a short time later he died.

Alone, despondent, full of grief and sorrow, Mary Ann decided to gather with the Saints in Nauvoo. She realized enough from the sale of her husband's carpenter's and cooper's tools, and some of her dressers and dinner dishes and other furniture and utensils, to pay her passage and board to Nauvoo. Her farewell meeting with her family was very difficult. It was a period of anguish and heartache since there was little chance she would ever see any of them again. "I left all that was near and dear to me," she wrote, "to travel some thousands of miles alone and cast my lot with the people of God."

Her diary says much about traveling on the *Harmony*, a sailing vessel with a friendly captain who was going to Quebec for lumber. There were storms and near disasters, but the ship had a friendly crew and passenger group, and the experience was pleasant. After two months at sea they arrived in Quebec, took a steamer to St. John, canal boat to Buffalo, and horse-drawn carriage to Kirtland, Ohio. After seven weeks there Mary Ann joined a group going to Nauvoo. Among those with the group going to Nauvoo was Peter Maughan, a convert from Cumberland, a county in north England, who had been baptized in 1838 and ordained an elder, but whose wife had died in 1841 as he and she were planning to migrate to Nauvoo. Peter was left with five small children ranging in age from two to ten. Peter proposed to Mary Ann, she accepted, and they were married almost immediately and settled in Nauvoo. Mary Ann, of course, raised his children, along with eight she subsequently had by Brother Maughan.

They lived in Nauvoo until the Saints were expelled from there, then worked in coal and lead mines for four years, and finally made the trek west in 1850. They eventually settled in Cache Valley in northern Utah and southern Idaho, where Peter Maughan was presiding bishop and Mary Ann was president of the stake Relief Society. Bishop Maughan even named one of the towns in southern Idaho after her, Weston, which is right next to Whitney, where President Ezra Taft Benson was born and grew up. Shortly after Mary Ann's eighth child was born, Bishop Maughan died, probably of pneumonia. For the next thirty years Mary Ann reared her large family, made countless visits to the sick and the poor, delivered babies, prepared deceased persons for burial, comforted mourners, and gave people medicine. She died in 1901 at the age of eighty-four. She was a wonderfully intelligent and spirited woman and left a marvelous heritage.

There are many other select sisters one could tell about. There was Hannah Tapfield King, who grew up among the classic shades and

bowers of Cambridge, a poet, essayist, and philosopher, mother of ten, author of four books and countless poems and articles, who joined the Church at age forty-two after hearing about it from her dressmaker. With her family she migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in 1853, four years after her baptism, and became part of the intellectual community in Utah. "I have lived in two worlds," she wrote near the end of her life, "the actual and the ideal." "The latter," she added, "gave me the poetry I needed to fill my soul."<sup>13</sup>

There was Margaret McNeil, of Scotland, who did not have the opportunity of schooling but nevertheless did a creditable job of teaching herself. She cared for her little brothers and sisters as they all migrated to the Salt Lake Valley, and then she married Henry Ballard, another British immigrant, and they eventually had eleven children. Her husband was bishop of their ward in Logan for thirty-nine years and she was president of the Relief Society for thirty years. One of her sons was Melvin J. Ballard, an Apostle and one of the great preachers of the restored Church. Apostle Russell Ballard is her great-grandson.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, let me mention Isabella Hales, of Kent, who migrated early enough to the States to have met the Prophet Joseph Smith. "On shaking hands with him," she wrote, "I received the holy spirit in such great abundance that I felt it thrill my whole system, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I thought I had never beheld so lovely a countenance. Nobility and goodness were in every feature," she wrote. Isabella married Joseph Horne, my wife's great-grandfather, and bore fifteen children, including three sets of twins. (And that same tradition continued in my wife's family: Harriet's father and mother also had three sets of twins.) Isabella eventually became general treasurer of the Relief Societies of the Church, helped to found the first LDS hospital in Utah, and was regarded, next to Eliza R. Snow, as the chief organizer among women in the West.<sup>15</sup>

These were all admirable persons, worthy of our remembering them. The gospel is a great school, a testing ground for us all, a means of attaining true happiness in this life and exaltation in the world to come. May we all prove worthy and valiant.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sources on nineteenth-century Mormon converts in Britain include: V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, and Larry C. Porter, eds., *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Solihull, West Midlands: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987); P. A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965); Lavina Fielding Anderson, "In the Crucible: Early British Saints," *Ensign* 9 (December 1979): 51-55; and Rebecca Cornwall, "Surviving: Mormon Women of Great Britain, 1838-1888," typescript; the Cornwall article will be published in *Brigham Young University Studies* 27 (Spring 1987).

<sup>2</sup>Doritt Harvey Brough, "A Difficult Journey," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959–77), 20:200.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. 20:204.

<sup>4</sup>The best introduction is Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977).

<sup>5</sup>Elmer Edwards, "A Faithful Sister," *Millennial Star* 78 (4 May 1916): 278.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>7</sup>Descriptions of the appeals of Mormonism to nineteenth-century British women include Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 2–39; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 20–43; Leonard J. Arrington and Susan Arrington Madsen, *Mothers of the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987), 41–55, 89–107.

<sup>8</sup>Hannah Tapfield King, Diary, concluding note, Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).

<sup>9</sup>Based on Ruth May Fox, "My Story," typescript, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>10</sup>Jemima Luke, "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story," in *Sing with Me: Songs for Children* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970), B-69.

<sup>11</sup>Based on Patience Loader (Rozsa, Archer), Diary, LDS Church Archives. See also Leonard J. Arrington and Susan Arrington Madsen, *Sunbonnet Sisters* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984), 49–60.

<sup>12</sup>Based on "Journal of Mary Ann Weston Maughan," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959–77), 2:345–420. See also my essay in Douglas D. Alder, ed., *Cache Valley: Essays on Her Past and People* (Logan: Utah State University, 1976), 3–5.

<sup>13</sup>King, Diary, LDS Church Archives; Daughters of Utah Pioneers, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 6 Vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1954), 3:45–48; Jessie Embry, "Hannah Tapfield King," typescript in possession of the author; Hannah Tapfield King, "Memoir of the Early Mormon Life," Manuscript, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

<sup>14</sup>Margaret McNeil Ballard, "My Story," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959–77), 3:199–206.

<sup>15</sup>Mary Isabella Hales Horne, Autobiography, typescript in author's possession. Also Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877), 230–36, 332, 492; and Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (1901; reprint, Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1971), 1:807–8.



A map of Preston, 1 August 1843 (from Ordnance Survey 1, Sheet 89, Bolton)

# Publishing a Book of Mormon Poetry: *The Harp of Zion*

Thomas E. Lyon

In 1848 James Brady, a poor Irishman living in Scotland, was baptized into the LDS church. Five years later he still was well acquainted with poverty but with the help of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund was able to heed Church counsel to flee “Babylon” and emigrate to America. En route to “Zion,” while in St. Louis, Missouri, he wrote to friends in Scotland, recalling the tight financial circumstances surrounding his departure: “When I left Glasgow I had 5 shillings and I gave 3 [shillings] and sixpence in Liverpool for the harp of zion.”<sup>1</sup> His grand sum of five shillings at departure would have equaled about one dollar and twenty-five cents in United States money, yet he paid, seemingly squandered, more than two-thirds of his total savings to buy a single volume of poetry! What influences acted upon destitute Brady and thousands of other poor LDS Saints, causing them to lay out scarce and needed savings to purchase a single book of poems? Early Mormon leaders placed such a high value on poetic expression of the principles of the restored gospel that Church funds were used to pay for the publication and distribution costs of the first book of LDS poetry. By purchasing the *Harp of Zion*, James Brady was participating in both a material and spiritual activity that would, he was assured, aid his eternal salvation.

In 1856 European Mission President Franklin Richards placed one more “must for Mormons” on the pocketbooks of the Saints:

It is the duty and privilege of the Saints . . . to procure and study the poetical works of the Church, that their authors may be encouraged and the spirit of poetry [may be] cultivated in the bosoms of the readers by “the thoughts that speak and words that burn” on each page. When man can be taught principle in the beautiful language of poesy, the affections of the heart are purified, the soul aspires to ennobling deeds, and the judgement is better directed in performing them.<sup>2</sup>

Now, besides paying tithing, contributing to the Salt Lake Temple, donating to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, purchasing the *Millennial Star*, and supporting the traveling elders, Saints were expected to buy

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Thomas E. Lyon is a professor of Spanish and chairman of the department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University.

“the poetical works of the Church,” and then, of all things, study them! Richards affirmed the purposes of this LDS poetic endeavor: (1) to encourage the authors, (2) to cultivate the spirit of poetry, and (3) to teach [gospel] principles in poetic language. When these purposes are met by faithful Saints, Richards claimed: (1) the heart is purified, (2) the soul aspires to ennobling deeds, and (3) judgment is led to wiser actions. All of these benefits were promised to members, resulting from “the thoughts that speak and words that burn” in LDS poetry.

Since the late 1830s, LDS newspapers and periodicals often featured a poem or hymn, giving it a prominent place on the front or last page. The first issue of the *Millennial Star* in 1840 carried a poem. Eliza R. Snow, Thomas Ward, and a few others frequently published original contributions, usually occasional poetry written at the death of a prominent person or the celebration of an important event. Church newspapers in Missouri and Nauvoo as well as the *Star* from Liverpool, followed this common nineteenth-century practice of treating readers to a homegrown poem. If no Church member submitted a creative piece, the journal editor “borrowed” an appropriate poem from another newspaper or current anthology.

In March 1844, John Lyon (1803–89) joined the LDS church in Kilmarnock, Scotland. Although he had not mastered reading and writing skills until he was past age twenty-five, by 1844 he had already worked for seven newspapers in Ayrshire, Scotland; assisted in compiling anthologies of local poetry; and published several poems in county papers. His rough-writing, pre-Mormon friends recalled that “he aspired to be a poet” but was a rather irreverent “Saul among the prophets.”<sup>3</sup> After baptism into the new, apparently heretical faith, Lyon found it difficult to get his poetry published in Scotland. The *Millennial Star*, however, was eager for Mormon verse. Lyon’s poetry quickly changed from the usual Romantic emphasis on nature, self, and exaggerated emotion to praise and joy for his newfound faith. On 15 November 1845 the *Star* first published a poem by Lyon, “Man,” a rambling philosophical treatise comparing humankind and nature. From this date Lyon’s poetry regularly appeared in the official Church journal; nearly forty poems in the *Star* reached thousands of readers in Great Britain and North America.

Lyon became the unofficial poet laureate of Mormonism in Great Britain. His small home in Kilmarnock, already crowded with a dozen children, served as an aesthetic haven for passing Church dignitaries. Levi Richards and his nephews, Samuel W. and Franklin D. Richards, all record delightful evenings spent in the Lyon home, “singing and talking,” hearing and reciting poetry, participating in demonstrations of “mesmerism [hypnosis] and phrenology.”<sup>4</sup> On 1 December 1847, Lyon and Samuel Richards even traveled to the nearby birthplace of

Robert Burns. Authorities who visited with the Lyon family nearly always described the stay in more positive, happy terms than visits with other local leaders in Great Britain. They took time for aesthetic inspiration and stimulation. The *Millennial Star* soon began referring to Lyon as “the Scottish Bard,” a somewhat pretentious but frequently used term. His fame spread to America where John Taylor,<sup>5</sup> Eliza R. Snow,<sup>6</sup> and others penned praising verses to him. As the number of Lyon’s poems in the *Star* grew, so did his fame with Mormon leaders. In January 1849, Orson Spencer wrote to Orson Pratt:

Among the worthy contributors to the *Star*, I shall not be deemed invidious to name, distinctly and prominently, our highly esteemed brethren Elders Lyons and Mills. Their genius in the poetic department, and the devotedness of their productions to the service of God and his people, deserve the fostering care of all the Saints who love the high praise of God in sacred and commemorative songs. The excellent songs and hymns of our poets preach with unmistakable melody and power; and the gifts of the sweet singers of Israel will doubtless be both honored and perfected in future worlds.<sup>7</sup>

Lyon, the most published of these “sweet singers of Israel,” quite logically conceived of publishing an entire volume of his poems. While Lyon was serving a three-year mission in England, President Orson Pratt encouraged him to gather and publish his scattered verse; the idea and Lyon’s hope for fame grew. However, on 24 July 1851 he wrote his mission supervisor, Levi Richards, that “I have entirely given up the idea of publishing my poems as my means are not adequate.”<sup>8</sup> Lyon’s dynamic young Apostle friend, Franklin D. Richards, however, had a plan. Richards had been a major mover in organizing the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. When he replaced Orson Pratt as European mission president in January 1851, he implemented the cost-sharing program which would allow many of the poorer European Saints to emigrate. Lyon, or Richards, saw an opportunity and suggested that the proceeds from a book of Mormon poetry be donated to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund rather than to the author. The initial costs of publication would be funded by the Liverpool office of the Church; the office would handle the sales and return profits to the altruistic fund.

In late 1851 Richards recorded that “spent this day writing . . . to John Lyon permitting him to dedicate his book of poems to me.”<sup>9</sup> With this nearly official Church approval, Lyon began an eight-month task of collecting his scattered manuscripts, rewriting many poems, recopying thirty-two compositions already published in the *Star*, and writing scores of new lyric pieces. In September 1852, he delivered 105 handwritten poems to friend and new mission president, Samuel W. Richards, in Liverpool. Lyon then continued by train to London where a young convert, Frederick Piercy, sketched his portrait for the frontispiece of the soon-to-be published book. Lyon suggested the name *Harp of Zion* for

the collection, an indication of the Mormon content of most of the poetry. A month after he submitted the manuscript the *Star* announced:

The *Harp of Zion* is the title of a volume of Poetry by Elder John Lyon, which is now in press, and will shortly be ready for sale. It will be beautifully printed, with fine clear type, on superfine paper, and bound in a superior manner. We have no hesitation in saying that it will surpass, in appearance, any work which has hitherto been issued from this office.<sup>10</sup>

For a man who did not master basic reading and writing until in his midtwenties, the publication of a handsome volume of poetry was pure literary ecstasy. S. W. Richards had the book printed by J. Sadler of Liverpool, a publisher who did regular work for the Church. Sadler, Lyon, and Richards all took pride in the obvious fact that the book was “well stitched, fine cloth covered boards, elegantly decorated with designs in gold. It contained 223 pages of fine paper, well trimmed and gilt edged.”<sup>11</sup> Richards had ordered 5,100 copies; the actual count after binding was 5,148, bound with four different covers:

<u>No. of Copies</u>	<u>Binding</u>	<u>Expected Sale Price</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
3,881	regular cloth	2 shillings, 6 pence	\$ .62
917	cloth extra (gilt)	3 shillings, 6 pence	.87
300	morocco gilt	6 shillings, 6 pence	1.62
<u>50</u>	superior edition	6 shillings, 6 pence	1.62
5,148	Total		

In a time when poverty and illiteracy were serious daily realities for many British converts, 5,148 books of Mormon poetry presented a major marketing problem. Even in the 1980s it is rare for a publisher to print such a large first edition of a new poet. Richards had taken an obvious gamble but in characteristic nineteenth-century Mormon fashion was “thinking big.”

Production expenses of the book included printing, correcting plates, printing fifty copies on superior paper, engraving and printing the portrait of the author, binding, eleven pounds to Piercy for the portrait, some postage, and the cost of five copies sent (free) to the British museum. Total production costs amounted to 379 pounds, or approximately 1,895 U.S. dollars at the time.<sup>12</sup> If all the volumes of poetry were to sell at suggested prices, the clerk calculated that 607 pounds would accrue to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, a net profit of 228 pounds, or \$1,150 over printing costs. Many poor Saints would thus be helped on their way to Zion.

The *Millennial Star* regularly reminded its readers to buy the book of poems, “nobly donated [by the author] to the ‘Perpetual Emigrating Fund.’ ” Those who purchased would be “aiding one of the most philanthropic, glorious, and God-like enterprises pertaining to this last dispensation.”<sup>13</sup> Another gentle urging a few weeks later hailed the

“talented author,” his “praiseworthy and God-like object of gathering the Lord’s poor” and admonished that “no [true] Saint will be satisfied to be destitute of a copy.”<sup>14</sup> Yet despite the gloriously positive adjectives and promises, sales moved slowly. Considering that the average factory worker or weaver of 1853 made less than one shilling a day (about twenty-five U.S. cents), the book was rather expensive—three to seven days’ wages for one volume of poetry! By 30 June 1854, a year and a half after publication, 979 copies had been purchased by members in Great Britain.<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, a higher percentage of the cloth gilt (the type James Brady purchased) and morocco gilt had sold than the cheaper edition, an indication that members were purchasing it for its appearance on a shelf as much as for its poetic content.

Eight years after publication, when George Q. Cannon took the reins of the European Mission presidency, he inventoried books in stock and found nearly 3,400 volumes of the *Harp of Zion* still on hand; only 1,765 had been sold.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, the Church did not realize expected profits for the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. John Lyon was not the only poet with a large backlog of books. In 1856, three years after the *Harp of Zion* appeared, and while Franklin D. Richards was once again heading up the European Mission, the Church published Eliza R. Snow’s *Poems: Religious, Political, Historical*. The total number printed was reduced, but during the three years prior to Cannon’s inventory only nineteen copies had sold.<sup>17</sup> Even this highly visible starlet of Mormonism ran into the reality of low readership and few purchasers. Cannon crated up many of Snow’s remaining 2,590 volumes and 3,404 of the *Harp* and sent them to Church headquarters. An 1864 advertisement in the *Deseret News* notes that both books were on sale at the Deseret Book Store and Bindery. The *Harp* sold for:

Cloth	\$1.00
Cloth, gilt	\$1.25
Morocco, gilt	\$2.25

which is approximately thirty-eight U.S. cents higher per volume than costs in Great Britain.<sup>18</sup> The works apparently sold better in “Zion.” At Lyon’s death in 1889 the *Millennial Star* observed that “thousands of copies [of the *Harp of Zion*] are to be found scattered through the homes of Utah.”<sup>19</sup>

Church leaders took pride in pointing to these two volumes of poetry. On 13 August 1857 John Lyon participated in the laying of the cornerstone for the Salt Lake Temple. The uncertainty of the temple’s future did not impede the ceremony in which the principal writings of the latter-day Restoration were preserved in a large metal box. Modern scriptures, translations, a few select journals, hymnbooks, Deseret gold coins, and two books of poetry—Lyon’s *Harp* and Snow’s *Poems*—

were selected for inclusion, further proof that Church authorities saw great value in preserving an artistic as well as a spiritual heritage.<sup>20</sup>

Lyon divided the 104 poems in the *Harp* into four categories: poems, sonnets, songs, and hymns. The fifty-eight poems are an assorted collection of early verses, reflections on his missionary work in Worcester (1849–51), and deep exultations in the all-encompassing gospel of the LDS church. Eighteen tightly structured sonnets deal with general topics, always tempered by the light of Mormonism: “Faith,” “Lust,” “Regret,” and “Obedience” are four excellent examples of poetic composition. The third section comprises sixteen “songs,” really poems which could be sung to popular Scottish tunes—“The Lass o’ Glenshee,” “The Ivy Green,” etc. The words to most of these songs reflect LDS goals or activities—“Mountain Dell,” “Song of Zion,” “Mormon Triumph.” A few are light, almost jocose, likely written before Lyon joined the Church. Ten hymns make up the final section. Seven of these hymns were already in print in the 1851 LDS hymnal. Lyon’s young Apostle friend, Franklin D. Richards, had put the new hymnal together, the ninth edition, in an attempt to replace “‘about sixty’ hymns with more appropriate ones.”<sup>21</sup> Lyon is clearly the most represented author in the hymnal. None of his hymns had been previously published in the *Millennial Star*; Richards likely solicited them from Lyon for the new hymnal. Each hymn deals with a specific event or ordinance—marriage, blessing the sick, confirmation. Most of these hymns remained in subsequent editions of LDS hymnals until 1927. Two survived until 1948, keeping Lyon’s name before Mormons each time they opened their hymnbooks.

A few examples from the *Harp of Zion* reveal the poetic intensity and deep conviction of the author; others show his humor and delight in life. Nile Washburn, after an extensive study of early Mormon poetry, concluded that Lyon’s poem “The Apostate” was easily the best LDS poem of the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE APOSTATE

##### A Fragment

I knew him, ere the roots of bitterness  
 Had grown to putrid cancer in his soul.  
 Then Revelation’s light gleamed o’er his mind  
 In strange fantastic dreams of future bliss;  
 He saw the dawn, and this was quite enough  
 For speculation’s visionary claim.  
 Precocious, in a day from childhood to  
 A man, he grew a giant of his kind;  
 Until his head was in the clouds, and there  
 He saw the myst’ries of the aërial world!  
 All knowledge, ere it was revealed, he knew.  
 The knotty points in Scripture he could solve,

By presto touch of talismanic wand,  
 And, Patriarch like, had the discerning gift  
 To know the ancient seeds of Israel's race.  
 The spirits of all men he could discern,  
 And oft, through speculation's vain conceit,  
 He did interpret, to indignation,  
 And raised the fouler passions of a few;  
 While some admired, in sycophantic phrase,  
 That made the humbler of the Saints to blush.  
 The Gathering was his constant theme; for he  
 Had dreamed of golden gates, and pearly walls,  
 And palaces, and ghostly saints at ease  
 Reclining 'neath the palm-tree's shade at noon.  
 And so he left, to seek this fairy land  
*Uncounselled*, in his *own* imaginings.  
 But ah! he thought not of the fiery path  
 Where persecution, poverty, and death,  
 Await the just, ere they can sing the song  
 Of ransom'd ones, by suffering perfect made.

Thus, full of novelty's romance, he found  
 The city of the Saints, and with it all  
 The stern realities of life. His hope,  
 Like morning mist, evaporated quite,  
 And with it, all his dreams of phantom bliss  
 Which nightly pictur'd out Elysian fields,  
 Woods, lawns, and bowers, and wizard, winding streams,  
 By crystal founts, and cool refreshing groves!  
 Amazed beyond description to rehearse,  
 He tried to reconcile his blasted hopes,  
 When he beheld the toil-worn sons of God  
 Rolling the stone of Joseph, pond'rous grown:  
 Still disaffection's deadly 'venomed sting  
 Withered his schemes, till every sense became  
 Corrupt, and dead. He neither saw, nor felt,  
 Nor heard, nor savour'd of the things of God.  
 Then falsehood came, and with it came distrust;  
 Truth error seemed, and lies appeared as truth!  
 And holy men mere swindling vagabonds!  
 The Temple, once revered, stood folly's shrine!  
 His jaundiced eye suspiciously reversed  
 The objects he perceived, or thought he saw.  
 The name, that erst gave pleasure's pure delight,  
 Rang in his ears a strange delusive sound.  
 Like smould'ring embers still the hatred burned  
 In his foul mind, till every passion burst  
 Their prison'd fire, and blazed one sulph'rous flame  
 Of malice, hotter than the Stygian lake!  
 And so he fell from his gigantic height,  
 As we have seen a falling meteor fall  
 From out the starry vault, which never had,  
 'Mong constellations, a fixed residence,  
 Save the combustive fluid of scattered gas,

That, kindled by the windy current, flashed,  
And falling, seemed a blazing orb of heaven!

.....  
Forgotten, nearly twenty moons he'd left  
Nauvoo! when lo! in Scotland I beheld  
This strange, outlandish looking man at church  
Among the Saints. I wondered much, I watched  
Him when the congregation sang in praise  
The songs of Zion! but his lips moved not,  
And when they knelt, he stood a statue mute  
Amidst the prostrate throng of worshippers.  
His bas'lish eye in rolling anguish told  
The gnawings of the bitter worm within.  
I met him after service, and he strove  
To imitate the Saints' fond welcome greet,  
But when his hand touched mine,—Lord save me, how  
I shook! Touched with his influence of despair;  
It ran like lightning o'er my mortal frame,  
Benumbing all the energies of life.  
The Prophet, Saints, and all their labours, were  
His theme of execration and contempt.  
Anon he railed of horrid, murd'rous deeds,  
Of av'rice, cruelty, an heartless fraud,  
Pollution, and a thousand evil ways  
Unheard of, save in his degen'rate heart.  
Apostles! fiends in human shape, he viewed;  
The Priesthood! dupes, or duped. In madness thus  
He raved, and counted o'er his money lost;—  
The turning period of his selfish soul—  
And like old Shylock, grinned in bitter spite  
To have his "pound of flesh." We parted thus.  
'Twas past all patience, longer to endure.<sup>23</sup>

A well-wrought sonnet, "Lust," teaches high moral principles:

#### LUST

Lust is the offspring of a thousand sighs,  
Intrigue, deception, and as many lies;  
A strange compound of hidden, plotting ill,  
To fire with rage, to torture, or to kill;  
Fraught with distrust, anxiety, and care,  
Jealousy, revenge, and unconsolated despair:  
The softest passion of a menial's heart,  
That ebbs and flows, as impulse plays its part;  
At times o'ercome with feelings proud and mean,  
That lurk in secret, yet are ever seen  
In looks and gestures, thoughts, and strong desire,  
That live, and burn unquenched; undying fire,  
That e'en in death, with all life's powers destroyed,  
Still longs and lusts, yet never is enjoyed.<sup>24</sup>

Humor and lighthearted poetry humanizes the poet and his world:

ELEGY—ON WEE HUGHIE,  
A Pet Canary

My bonnie wee Hugh was a canty bird,  
Though now he lies cauld 'neath the silent yird;  
He whistled fu' blythely "the humours o' glen,"  
And spake Wee Hughie as weel as some men.  
He pick'd from my han' the piles o' hemp seed:  
But he'll never speak mair, for Hughie is dead!

When the bairns were a' ranting wi' boist'rous noise,  
Wee Hughie was aye at the top o' his voice.  
But when learning his lesson, fu' doucely he  
Would cock his bit head, and shut his a' e'e.  
And he looked sae pleased wi' his sugared bread:  
But he'll never pick mair, for Hughie is dead!

Nae loungee was he when the morning light came,  
Be't summer or winter, 'twas a' the same,  
He would dight his neb on the bauke tapping thing,  
Then straik down his breast, and' stretch out his wing,  
Then ring up the house wi' whistling a screed:  
But he'll ne'er wake us mair, for Hughie is dead!<sup>25</sup>

Lyon was justifiably proud of his volume of poetry "got up in a superior manner." During his later life he basked in the warm acclaim as the author of the first volume of poems ever issued by a member of the LDS church.<sup>26</sup> The *Harp of Zion* signified a new venture for the LDS church; authorities had previously printed newspapers, tracts, magazines, new scripture, an emigrant's guide, and so on—practical printing for a pragmatic church. In 1853, the same year in which the *Harp of Zion* appeared, Lucy Mack Smith's biography of her son Joseph was printed. But never before, and very rarely since, had the Church paid for and actively publicized a book of creative poetry, its first venture into aesthetic matters. This tacit approval indicated that many authorities as well as lay members felt that the glorious uniqueness of the Restoration must be captured in creative form as well as rhetorical and scriptural discourse. Novels and short stories were clearly not yet acceptable to Church leaders—they created a false world, a fiction, and tended to corrupt, especially women and children.<sup>27</sup> Poetry, on the other hand, was thought to enliven and penetrate truth:

Thus poetry, like streamlets glad,  
With flowing Truth's allied,  
'Tis when old thought to new we add  
That wisdom's deified.<sup>28</sup>

# APPENDIX A

## Liverpool Financial Records 16 November 1853

	£	s.	d.
To printing 5100 copies Harp of Zion including stereotyping, as per J. Sadler's a/c	176	12	8
Correcting plates	7	17	6
Printing 50 copies on Superior paper	6	0	0
Engraving portrait—John Lyon	10	0	0
Printing 5150 copies of portrait	10	19	6
Carriage on 3000 as from London	0	4	4
Binding 3881 copies in cloth	76	16	2 3/4
Binding 917 copies in cloth gt.	32	9	6
Binding 300 copies in moro ex	45	0	0
Binding 50 Sup. copies in moro ex	7	10	0
J. Lyon's to London about portrait	11	0	0
Postage on proof sheets	0	4	3
Entering at Stationer's and Certificate	0	10	0
5 copies in cloth supplied to British Museum and Stationers' Hall as pr act.	0	10	0
	378	14	0 1/4

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Excerpted from James Brady to David and Ann MacNeil, 21 May 1853, letter in possession of Frederick S. Buchanan, Salt Lake City. Copy in author's possession.

<sup>2</sup>*Millennial Star* 18 (16 February 1856): 106.

<sup>3</sup>A local historian of Kilmarnock also faintly praised Lyon's pre-Mormon "poetic effusions." See John Kelso Hunter, "Retrospects: John Lyon, the Mormon Poet," *Kilmarnock Standard*, Senex supplement, 20 April 1895, 6.

<sup>4</sup>See various diaries in Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives); some examples noted in Samuel W. Richards, 24 April, 30 August, and 1 December 1847; Franklin D. Richards, 5 December 1846; Levi Richards, 4 March 1851.

<sup>5</sup>See John Taylor, "Lines Inscribed to the Author," in John Lyon, *Harp of Zion* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 3.

<sup>6</sup>Eliza R. Snow, *Poems: Religious, Historical, and Political* (London: LDS Book Depot, 1856), 235.

<sup>7</sup>*Millennial Star* 11 (1 February 1849): 42-43.

<sup>8</sup>John Lyon, Letters to Levi Richards, 1849-51, in author's possession.

<sup>9</sup>Franklin D. Richards, Diary, 15 October 1851, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>10</sup>*Millennial Star* 14 (2 October 1852): 504.

<sup>11</sup>William M. Powell, "The Harp of Zion," MS, 1, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.

<sup>12</sup>The Liverpool office kept excellent financial records of the exact amounts spent for printing. On 16 and 17 November 1853 a clerk detailed the entire account for the *Harp of Zion*. For a summary of this account see appendix A which is adapted from vol. 8 of European Mission Publication Accounts Journal, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>13</sup>*Millennial Star* 14 (2 October 1852): 504-5.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.* 15 (29 January 1853): 73.

<sup>15</sup>European Mission Publication Accounts Journal 9:49.

<sup>16</sup>George Q. Cannon, Letters to Brigham Young, 31 March 1861, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Deseret News*, 14 September 1864.

<sup>19</sup>*Millennial Star* 51 (23 December 1889): 813.

<sup>20</sup>Journal History, 13 August 1857.

<sup>21</sup>This judgment comes from Helen H. Macaré, "The Singing Saints: A Study of the Mormon Hymnal, 1835-1950" (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1961), 352. Macaré observes that after the schisms of the Nauvoo period, Church leaders felt the need to create more hymns of their own, written by faithful Mormons. Lyon fit the criteria very well.

<sup>22</sup>Nile J. Washburn, "A Critical Study of Latter-day Saint Poetry from 1847 to 1877" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1936), 122.

<sup>23</sup>Lyon, *Harp of Zion*, 53.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>26</sup>The claim, however, is subject to some dispute since in 1840 Parley P. Pratt had published a 140 page collection of his poems and miscellaneous writings, which may be considered the first book of poetry published by a nineteenth-century Mormon. It did not, however, have the certification of the Church, which is tacitly implied in Lyon's 1853 work, published by and for Church members. In later years, newspapers in Utah regularly hailed Lyon as the first Mormon to publish a complete book of poetry, likely because he was so well known, Parley P. Pratt was dead, and "thousands of copies [of Lyon's *Harp of Zion*] are to be found scattered through the homes of Utah" (see *Millennial Star* 51 [23 December 1889]: 813).

<sup>27</sup>*Millennial Star* 22 (18 February 1860): 110.

<sup>28</sup>Lyon, *Harp of Zion*, 139.



A map of Liverpool, 1 April 1840  
(from Ordnance Survey 1, Sheet 79, Denbigh)

# George Q. Cannon and the British Mission

Donald Q. Cannon

George Q. Cannon was both a product of and a contributor to the British Mission. He was converted in Liverpool in 1840 and returned as mission president in the 1860s. His conversion story really begins with his aunt Leonora Cannon. She had emigrated to Toronto, Upper Canada, where she met and married John Taylor, likewise an emigrant from England. A Mormon missionary, Parley P. Pratt, converted and baptized the young couple in May 1836. Following their baptism, the Taylors moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and subsequently to Missouri and Illinois. Called to serve as an Apostle in 1838, John Taylor went with others of the Quorum of the Twelve on a mission to England in 1839, carrying a letter of introduction to George Cannon from his wife Leonora. This “referral” gave him easy access to the Cannon home in Liverpool. After Elder Taylor’s initial visit, George Q. Cannon’s mother told him, “George, there goes a man of God. He is come to bring salvation to your father’s house.”<sup>1</sup> Elder Taylor met with the family again and introduced them to the Church by singing some of the hymns of Zion, testifying to the divine calling of Joseph Smith, and loaning the family a copy of the Book of Mormon. The Cannons studied the book with great zeal. Upon completing the book George Cannon concluded, “an evil-minded man could not have written it, and a good man would not have tried to write it with the intent to deceive.”<sup>2</sup> The Cannon family was baptized and emigrated to Nauvoo, arriving in the spring of 1843.

When they arrived in Nauvoo, young George had a remarkable experience concerning the Prophet Joseph Smith. Although he had never seen a picture of Joseph Smith, George Q. Cannon knew him instantly. This spiritual experience had a profound influence upon the young man. George Q. Cannon’s mother had died at sea, and his father died in August 1844. Subsequently, George went to live with his uncle John Taylor. From John Taylor, who was editor and publisher of the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, George learned the printing business. He later put this training to good use when he published *The Western Standard*, an LDS newspaper in San Francisco. This paper became a powerful force for good and established George Q. Cannon’s reputation

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Donald Q. Cannon is a professor of Church history and doctrine and associate dean of religious education at Brigham Young University.

as editor and writer. While in San Francisco in the mid-1850s, he also published the Book of Mormon in Hawaiian. He had translated the book while serving as a missionary in Hawaii.

Returning to Utah during the Utah War, George received still another publishing assignment. Brigham Young directed him to take a printing press to Fillmore, Utah, and publish the *Deseret News* at that location. The *Deseret News* was published in Fillmore from April to September 1858. George Q. Cannon's training and expertise as a printer and publisher would enable him to render valuable service to the Church in the years ahead.<sup>3</sup>

Answering a call to serve a mission to the eastern states, young George Q. Cannon embarked on still another on-the-job training experience. His responsibilities were threefold: to correct misinformation about the Church; to preside over the branches of the Church in the East; and to act as Church emigration agent. His efforts to present correct information regarding the Mormons were greatly enhanced by his association with Colonel Thomas L. Kane, famed "friend of the Mormons." With his contacts, Colonel Kane was able to introduce Elder Cannon to influential editors and politicians. In his role as presiding officer over the branches, he had the responsibility of starting missionary work again after the interruption caused by the Utah War. His greatest responsibility lay in helping the Saints gather to Zion. One of his duties included meeting the Saints who arrived on board ships from Europe and arranging for their rail travel to Iowa, where they went by wagon or pushed handcarts to the Salt Lake Valley.<sup>4</sup>

While serving in the eastern states, George Q. Cannon was called to fill the vacancy in the Council of the Twelve created by the assassination of Parley P. Pratt in May 1857. Elder Pratt had prophesied that George Q. Cannon would become a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and this call fulfilled that prophecy. The membership of the Church sustained George Q. Cannon in April conference in 1860, and President Brigham Young ordained him on 26 August 1860. Wilford Woodruff noted that George Q. Cannon was the thirteenth Apostle whom Brigham Young had ordained. A few days later, Elder Woodruff recorded what Brigham Young had said on the office and calling of an Apostle:

When an Apostle is Called & ordained all the keys of the kingdom of God upon Earth are sealed upon him and God reveals his mind & will through that source to the Children of man for the government & salvation of the Children of man.<sup>5</sup>

Within a month of his ordination, Elder Cannon was called to serve in the British mission presidency. He accepted this call at considerable personal sacrifice since he had been away from Salt Lake City more than

he had been home for over a decade. His second wife, Sarah Jane Jenne, whom he married in 1857, had only spent six months with him. His first wife, Elizabeth Hoagland, had also suffered from their lengthy periods apart. Doubtless, these factors caused him some concern as he embarked on still another mission for the Church.

The call specified that he would serve with two other Apostles, Amasa M. Lyman and Charles C. Rich. These three would constitute the European mission presidency, with headquarters in Liverpool, England. It is clear that George Q. Cannon was the junior member of the presidency. Amasa M. Lyman had been called as an Apostle in 1842 and had wide experience in Church service. Charles C. Rich received his call to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve in 1849 and had also served in many important positions. As Lawrence Flake has pointed out, "George Q. Cannon's call to the mission presidency demanded a full measure of the tact and diplomacy for which he was becoming well known."<sup>6</sup>

As George Q. Cannon began his service in the European Mission, he brought with him not only the requisite tact and diplomacy, but also other important traits and skills. The experience in printing and publishing which began in Nauvoo would serve him well in England. In fact, the problems associated with Church publishing in Great Britain may have led to his call to the mission presidency. George had also developed business acumen and organizational skills. All in all, he was well prepared for the task which lay ahead.

When Elder Cannon landed at Liverpool, he entered a country quite different from the United States. England in the 1860s was a combination of "British Empire" and "Victorian England." On the international scene, the British Empire reached around the globe to such remote areas as Australia, India, South Africa, and Canada. Because of its imperial strength, Great Britain was the most powerful country in the world. On the domestic scene, Victorian England featured political liberty and social restriction. Political liberty rested on centuries of historical development, whereas the social restrictions of Victorian England were a late manifestation of Puritanism. The immense wealth produced by the Industrial Revolution had created an amazing diversity of classes, and wealth and poverty existed side by side. Industrialization had propelled lower-class workers from agricultural settings to urban ghettos. Cities such as London, Birmingham, Leeds, and Manchester experienced dramatic population explosions. The lower classes felt abandoned by Methodism, which had become a middle-class movement, and were grasping for a new religion. The Mormon missionaries proselyted primarily among the working classes.<sup>7</sup>

The Civil War, which began in 1861, severely impaired diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Great Britain. This situation had all the greater impact upon Elder Cannon because of his belief in the prophecy

made by the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning the Civil War and the U.S. turning to Great Britain for aid.<sup>8</sup> While in New York, on his way to England, he had learned of the events concerning the Civil War and expressed appreciation for the revelation on war (D&C 87) which Joseph Smith had received. George Q. Cannon, like so many early Latter-day Saints, saw the war in terms of the intervention of God in the affairs of men.<sup>9</sup>

President Cannon's responsibilities in Great Britain required him to serve as publisher, emigration agent, administrator, and spokesman for the Church. These four spheres of activity kept him extremely busy and required all the strength and ability he could muster.

In the area of Church publications, President Cannon inherited a host of problems. In the 1850s, a policy of distributing printed matter to individuals on credit had emerged. This system offered the advantages of making it easier for missionaries to obtain literature and of encouraging printing in large quantities, with attendant economies. There were, however, several distinct disadvantages: it centralized the writing and printing, thereby establishing a monopoly; it increased dependence on non-Mormon publishers; it encouraged a large debt; some printed items failed to sell and a surplus of printed matter accumulated.<sup>10</sup> Writing to President Brigham Young, President Cannon complained of "having 2,590 volumes of Sister E. R. Snow's poems, 19 having been sold in three years." He went on to say that "there are editions of some works, which at the ration they have been sold during the past three years will take half the millennium to sell."<sup>11</sup> George Q. Cannon's training and experience enabled him to move vigorously to find solutions to these problems. He gave away many of the tracts to be used by the members. Some items which contained errors were simply destroyed.

Prior to George Q. Cannon's term as mission president, Church printing had been contracted out to non-LDS printing establishments in England. President Cannon supervised the creation of a Church printing office, purchasing a steam-driven press, type, and other items needed for such an operation. In a letter to Brigham Young he outlined some of the problems they faced and wrote, "I have been compelled to employ mostly gentile printers, which I do not like; we have a few in the Church; but they are in the ministry, and can ill be spared."<sup>12</sup> Ultimately the printing office proved a success.

The main item published in the Church printing office was the *Millennial Star*. This magazine had been published since 1840 and was very influential not only in England but throughout the Church. The *Star* was an important means of communication within the Church and also served as a missionary tool. Stressing the importance of the *Star*, President Cannon told the missionaries: "If the Elders were to make it a practice to constantly read the *Star*, they would realize considerable

information and benefit therefrom. It would prove to them just as profitable as the Scriptures.”<sup>13</sup>

Elder Cannon had the responsibility of writing editorials for the *Millennial Star*. These editorials were to instruct, preach, and prophesy, and his journal indicates that they consumed a substantial portion of his time and energy. The entry for Tuesday, 16 July 1861, for example, reads: “On Tuesday afternoon and evening engaged in writing an editorial for the ‘Star’ entitled ‘The Past and Present of the Church.’”<sup>14</sup> Sometimes the editorials were signed and sometimes they remained unsigned, and they covered a wide range of topics. He commented, for example, upon war: “War is one of the scourges which man, by his sinfulness, has brought upon himself. There is one way—and but one way—to avert it, and that is for the people to obey God’s commands.”<sup>15</sup> Most of his editorials were on gospel topics. He wrote, for example, concerning the struggle between good and evil, truth and error: “The contest between truth and error is all the time going on; and, as every day rolls on, that contest increases in its vindictiveness.”<sup>16</sup> Many editorials contained sage advice and counsel on how to live the gospel successfully: “The older I grow the more I am sensible of the necessity of increasing my exertions and of living according to the principles of salvation.”<sup>17</sup> “As we are prepared to receive truth our heavenly Father will bestow it upon us.”<sup>18</sup> “The only way to maintain our position in the kingdom of God is to so conduct ourselves that we may have a living testimony of the truth continually dwelling in our bosoms.”<sup>19</sup>

One item which appeared in the *Millennial Star* in 1862 is of special interest. Most talks given by the mission presidency were considered routine items, but one talk by President Amasa Lyman eventually attracted considerable attention. On 16 March 1862, President Lyman spoke on the “Nature of the Mission of Jesus” at Dundee, Scotland. In that discourse, Elder Lyman “virtually denied the necessity of, and the fact of, the ‘Atonement of Jesus Christ.’”<sup>20</sup> He said, for example, “the Gospel is nowhere said to have been constituted of the death of Jesus”; and “I do not want you to believe that the blood of Jesus has cleansed you from all sin.”<sup>21</sup>

The Dundee Sermon caused little excitement until 1867, when someone brought it to the attention of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. After being confronted by the brethren, Lyman published a retraction in the *Deseret News*. Within a few months, however, Apostle Lyman was again preaching sermons that repudiated the Atonement. Later that year, he was dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve and in 1870 excommunicated from the Church.<sup>22</sup> Amasa Lyman had experimented with Spiritualism after joining the Church and was particularly influenced by the ideas of Andrew Jackson Davis. Davis taught that the shedding of blood by Jesus was unnecessary. Eventually,

as Loretta Hefner has written, Lyman's "loyalty to spiritualism had surpassed his loyalty to the Mormon church."<sup>23</sup>

Other items which issued from the Church press included books, tracts, pamphlets, and a hymnbook. Capitalizing on his earlier printing experience, Elder Cannon published a volume of editorials from the *Western Standard*. He hoped these editorials would be helpful to the youth of the Church in their efforts to live the gospel. In a sense, this work is a harbinger of his later work in the *Juvenile Instructor*.

With his experience and expertise in printing and publishing, George Q. Cannon was able to make a distinct contribution to Church printing in England by solving problems both technical and financial, clearing out surplus and waste material, and strengthening the *Millennial Star* and other Church publications with his editorial skills.

His responsibilities related to emigration resulted from the doctrine of gathering, which is a basic principle of the Restoration. The doctrine of gathering was revealed in 1830, and the keys of gathering were restored by Moses in 1836. Church leaders had given heavy emphasis to this doctrine in their preaching, especially in the years immediately preceding George Q. Cannon's British mission and during the time when he was in the British Isles. President Brigham Young had this to say concerning gathering the Saints:

We are gathering the people as fast as we can. We are gathering them to make Saints of them and of ourselves. Probably many of them will apostatize, though some will not apostatize until you give them their endowments; and then, if you do not speak out of the right corner of your mouth, they will apostatize; and if you do not laugh out of the right corner of your mouth, they will go. We are gathering a few that will be faithful in the midst of this people, and prepare themselves to be crowned kings and priests unto God. By-and-by you will see the Saints flock together. Will they come merely by one or two shiploads? No; it will require many more ships than we have heretofore employed to bring home the gathering thousands to Zion. Millions of people that now sit in darkness—that are now, to all appearance, in the region and shadow of death, will come to Zion.<sup>24</sup>

Ever since the earliest missionary work in England, faithful Saints had been gathering to Zion. Brigham Young had arranged for the first ships to carry emigrants as early as 1840, and about one thousand per year emigrated between 1840 and 1860.

George Q. Cannon was not a beginner when it came to arranging for emigration. He had been in charge of emigration while on his mission to the eastern states, prior to his call as an Apostle. The experience and business acumen which he gained at that time would stand him in good stead as he assumed the responsibility for emigration in England in the 1860s. His principal responsibility was in securing ships for the Saints who wished to travel to America. Concerning ships chartered during the 1860s Conway Sonne has written:

More than 20,000 Mormons emigrated across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans aboard sailing vessels during the 1860s. Another 3,900 emigrated from Liverpool to New York in steamships in the closing years of the decade. These ten years were the high water mark of Mormon overseas migration, for at least 24,600 Saints traveled by ship to Zion in that period, under both canvas and steam.

There were 46 sailing vessel passages from 1860 through mid-1868. Of these voyages 40 were made by ships, five by barks, and one by a brig. Eighteen vessels had made more than one voyage with Mormon companies. Of the sailing passages 25 originated at Liverpool, one at Le Havre, one at Melbourne, eight at Hamburg, five at Port Elizabeth, and six at London. All voyages terminated at New York with three exceptions—one at San Francisco and two at Boston. Thirty of the voyages were under the American flag, ten under the British, five under the German, and one under the Norwegian.<sup>25</sup>

The size of the Mormon emigrant companies during the 1860s was significantly larger, with an average 424 emigrants compared with an average of 266 in the 1850s. Sailing vessels used in the 1860s were larger and faster, although the passage time was only slightly improved. Shipboard conditions, however, were much better than earlier. Among the best new ships were the *William Tapscott* and the *Monarch of the Sea*. A total of 2,262 Saints sailed on the *William Tapscott*.<sup>26</sup> Describing the experience on board during an Atlantic crossing in the 1860s, Sonne writes:

To many emigrants the crowded life on a ship for weeks on end was a shock. Even under British law, which allowed three adult passengers for each five tons of registered tonnage, that provision was not a generous space allocation. A 1,000-ton vessel, for example, could carry 600 adults, a goodly number in confined quarters. Overcrowding also created sanitation problems, such as inadequate toilet and bathing facilities. For this reason emigrants preferred American ships that had two heads, or water closets, on each side of the deck. Even then these enclosures could smell like cesspools.<sup>27</sup>

Securing seaworthy vessels was a difficult and challenging task. Faced with such difficulties, President Cannon often sought the Lord's help. In such instances the Lord blessed him and the Saints by providing ships where professional shipping agents were unable to do so. Writing to Salt Lake, he reported: "I feel that I have been exceedingly blessed under the circumstances, as many offices in town are compelled to refund the people their money, it being out of their power to furnish them passages."<sup>28</sup> In this instance one sees that rare combination of business skill and spirituality.

Chartering ships involved large amounts of money. George Q. Cannon proved to be a hard and skillful bargainer as he negotiated contracts with ship captains and shipping tycoons. His diary contains frequent references to these negotiations. After securing the *Hudson* for

the same price as the *Monarch of the Sea*, he gave credit to the Lord, writing, "I wish to thank the Lord for the success which has attended my efforts to secure ships for our people."<sup>29</sup>

The Civil War had a detrimental impact upon the procurement of ships. The U.S. and Great Britain maintained a very delicate peace, but the possibility of armed conflict was a constant source of anxiety. Elder Cannon wrote to President Brigham Young:

The government is making active preparations for war. Great activity prevails in all the navy yards of this country, and the military are being prepared as rapidly as possible. It is reported that two of Cunard's steamships, besides other steamers, have been chartered for the purpose of taking troops to Canada.<sup>30</sup>

As president of the European Mission, George Q. Cannon encountered problems related to international tensions on the European continent as well as in Great Britain. He reported, for example, some of the difficulties confronting native Danish missionaries:

According to present appearances Germany and Denmark are likely to come to blows over the Schleswig Holstein difficulty. In anticipation of a war, Denmark is bringing her army up to its maximum strength. Many of our native missionaries are being drafted into the army and they are considerably excited over the matter. A few of the Saints, young men, who have means and who are liable to the draft are leaving for this country and are pushing on from here to the States. It seems as though it will not be long before those who are in Europe who wish to escape the dreadful necessity of having to take the sword to fight against their neighbors will also have to flee to Zion.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to securing ships, President Cannon had responsibility for forming companies of emigrants. This involved working with mission officers at various levels throughout the British Isles and Europe. Once the groups had been formed and arrived in Liverpool or some other port of embarkation, instructions had to be given. Reports from some of the Saints en route to Zion indicate that Elder Cannon often gave such instructions himself. Naomi Dowden wrote: "Brother George Q. Cannon gave the departing Saints instructions and appointed officers for the company." John Durrant, a passenger on another voyage, made this entry: "Brother George Q. Cannon came out to us and organized our brethren for the trip, and preached to us about being patient with one another and trying to help one another."<sup>32</sup> Elder Cannon recorded in his journal that he had organized the company on board the *John J. Boyd* and then commented: "The Lord is visibly blessing them in their efforts to escape from Babylon."<sup>33</sup>

President Cannon's organizational ability captured the attention of some non-Mormon British observers, including the famous nineteenth-century writer Charles Dickens. Most LDS emigrant ships had sailed

from Liverpool, but the *Amazon*, the ship which Dickens visited, sailed from London. There is evidence that Dickens deliberately chose a Mormon emigrant ship as the subject for one of his essays to be included in *The Uncommercial Traveller*. He had been interested in the Mormons as early as 1842, when he mentioned them in his *American Notes*,<sup>34</sup> but he admitted to some bias concerning them. He wrote that he was ready “to bear testimony against them if they deserved it, as I fully believed they would.”<sup>35</sup> To his surprise, he found them to be a much more praiseworthy group than he had imagined. Describing the ship’s company, he wrote:

nobody is in an ill-temper, nobody is the worse for drink, nobody swears an oath or uses a coarse word, nobody appears depressed, nobody is weeping. . . . Now I have seen emigrant ships before this day in June. And these people are so strikingly different from all other people in like circumstances whom I have ever seen, that I wonder aloud, “What would a stranger suppose these emigrants to be!”<sup>36</sup>

Apparently Dickens had an interview with George Q. Cannon concerning the Mormon emigration process. As a result of this interview and also his observations, Dickens wrote the following favorable description of Elder Cannon:

The Mormon Agent who had been active in getting them together, and in making the contract with my friends the owners of the ship to take them as far as New York on their way to the Great Salt Lake, was pointed out to me. A compactly-made handsome man in black, rather short, with rich brown hair and beard, and clear bright eyes. From his speech, I should set him down as American, probably a man who had “knocked about the world” pretty much. A man with a frank, open manner, and unshrinking look; withal a man of great quickness.<sup>37</sup>

George Q. Cannon characteristically failed to write anything in his journal about Charles Dickens but chose instead to write about a prophecy, made earlier by Elder Eli B. Kelsey, that had been partially fulfilled by the sailing of the *Amazon* from London rather than Liverpool.<sup>38</sup>

During his mission years in Great Britain, George Q. Cannon supervised the emigration of over thirteen thousand European Saints. When these emigrants arrived in New York or Boston, they traveled by railroad and steamboat to Florence, Nebraska. The actual route they followed included a rail trip from New York to Quincy, Illinois; a boat trip from Quincy to Hannibal, Missouri; a rail trip from Hannibal to St. Joseph, Missouri; and a boat trip from St. Joseph to Florence, Nebraska. During the 1860s, Florence became a major outfitting location for the journey to Utah. A new “down and back” plan had been devised by Brigham Young, which called for wagon trains to carry surplus Utah oxen and flour “down” to Florence and to bring poor immigrants and eastern goods “back” to Utah. This system made it possible for the

Church to transport the European Saints from Nebraska to Utah at practically no cost, whereas it had cost about fifty dollars per person to provide new wagons and teams for them at Florence. Some idea of the large number of Saints who came through Florence can be gained from using the figures for one year, 1861. During that year, an estimated 3,924 Latter-day Saints emigrated from Florence to Utah. Most of that number came from Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Thousands of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles and on the European continent had an opportunity to “gather to Zion” as a result of the efficient work of George Q. Cannon. His belief in the principle of gathering, his skill in organizing emigrant companies, and his ability to charter the best ships all worked together for the good of the Saints.

As a member of the mission presidency, Elder Cannon also had many and varied administrative responsibilities, for the Church organization as well as for the missionaries. In the 1860s the average LDS church membership in the British Isles numbered about fourteen thousand, a number that maintained itself despite large numbers of emigrants. There were about 361 branches of the Church during the years that Elder Cannon served in the mission presidency. On the average in the early 1860s there were 1,670 missionaries.<sup>40</sup> Although the gospel had been preached in England since 1837, the Church was still in its frontier stages. There were problems in the branches, conflicts among members, and a high rate of apostasy. These problems required much of the time and energy of Elder Cannon. His journals contain frequent references to his responsibilities in conducting conferences throughout the mission. He records, for example, that a semiannual conference was held in the Temperance Hall in Liverpool on 6 October 1861. He notes that the Church had been denied the use of the building earlier and so the opportunity to use it now reflected that attitudes toward the Church had improved. Two thousand people attended this conference.<sup>41</sup> The following week, he attended conferences in Leicester and Nottingham.<sup>42</sup> Generally, the brethren received a more cordial welcome in outlying areas than they did in Liverpool and London. Elder Cannon comments:

They do not appreciate the presence of the servants of God as they should do. In the country branches our arrival is hailed with gladness, and it is not an uncommon thing for the Saints to walk 15, 20, and 25 miles to have the privilege of listening to the Elders from Zion.<sup>43</sup>

The talks the brethren gave were often published in the *Millennial Star* and consequently became available to the membership at large. Their sermons were either calls to repentance, statements of encouragement, or instructions on how to implement gospel principles. Amasa M. Lyman spoke, for example, on “the importance of laboring to develop practical purity in life which renders us acceptable to God.”<sup>44</sup>

Often Elder Cannon's work with the members involved pain and frustration. His journal entries contain many references to Church courts. Concerning the case of an elder in Glasgow who was cut off from the Church for adultery, he wrote: "How much misery and trouble a wicked man can make!"<sup>45</sup> President Cannon recognized that public examples of sexual immorality could severely damage the Church.

From the very beginning, George Q. Cannon spent a great deal of time with the missionaries, training, counseling, and making assignments. In fact, a party of Mormon elders traveled with President Cannon to the mission field. He had been a successful missionary in Hawaii and had a strong conviction of the necessity and importance of missionary work. As mission president, he demanded the highest standards for himself as well as for his missionaries. He required the elders to be clad in a black suit and wear a silk hat. He urged them to earnestly seek the Spirit of the Lord and to preach by that same Spirit. He warned them about the evils of the world which would undermine their effectiveness. Chief among those evils, as he saw it, was adultery. He warned and prophesied that "the Elder who indulges in this sin (adultery) will be led to destruction."<sup>46</sup> When missionaries did yield to temptation, President Cannon dealt with them forcefully. If they could be reclaimed, he accomplished that by counseling. If their sin was too serious, he cut them off from the Church. When missionaries became discouraged and wanted to leave their missions early, he urged them to remain. Commenting on one such elder, he wrote: "I have reasoned with him on the impropriety and failure of indulging in such feelings and have pointed out to him how injurious the nonfulfilment of his present mission would be to him."<sup>47</sup>

As mission president, George Q. Cannon directed the labors of missionaries not only in Great Britain, but in Scandinavia, in Europe, and even in Africa. These responsibilities caused him to travel to areas of the mission outside England. Twice he traveled to the Continent to visit the missions in France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. He also visited the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. During such visits, he took time out for some sightseeing. In Denmark, for example, in the fall of 1862, he traveled extensively throughout Copenhagen and rural Denmark.<sup>48</sup> After a day of sightseeing in Copenhagen, he noted this in his journal: "In the afternoon walked out on the citadel walls in company with the brothers. It is called Frederikshavn and is a most formidable fortress and is said to be impregnable."<sup>49</sup>

During President Cannon's tour of duty, other churches of the Restoration launched their missionary work in England. Indeed, the first foreign mission of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) was in England. The earliest RLDS missionary called to serve in England was Charles Derry. The story of Charles Derry is of

special interest because he was LDS before he was RLDS. Raised in the Church of England, Derry converted to Mormonism in 1850 and gathered to Utah in 1853. A combination of circumstances—the death of his wife, poverty, disenchantment with LDS church leadership—caused him to leave Utah in 1859. Having moved to Nebraska, he was baptized into the RLDS movement in 1861. In 1863 he met Joseph Smith III, who called him to serve as a missionary in England.<sup>50</sup> He arrived in Liverpool on 4 February 1863. Only two days later he visited George Q. Cannon, whom he called “president of the Brighamite churches in England.”<sup>51</sup> Elder Derry requested permission to speak in LDS church meetings. President Cannon refused his request. Charles Derry charged that George Q. Cannon treated him with contempt. President Cannon recorded his side of the story in his journal, noting that Derry had “denied the faith” while in Utah. His view of Derry’s request is shown in the statement: “I did not view him and those with whom he associated in the same light that I did an honest sincere sectarian for they had known the truth and denied it while others were in ignorance.” He went on to say that “the object of their labor is to assail, defame and destroy the servants and Church of God.”<sup>52</sup>

Although both men were spiritual descendants of Joseph Smith and shared a common religious heritage, there was no love lost between them. Perhaps differences in their concept of authority and differences in their approach to teaching the gospel had created a gap which they seemed incapable of bridging. LDS missionaries taught people of other faiths outside of Mormonism, while RLDS missionaries seemed intent upon converting “Brighamites” to their faith.

After failing to make much progress in Liverpool, Elder Derry traveled to Chester, West Bromwich, and other communities in the area. In West Bromwich he reported attending a Brighamite meeting, but said their minds were poisoned against him. After months of perseverance and hard work, he succeeded in baptizing Henry Tyler, and eventually a branch was organized on 17 May 1863 at West Bromwich, consisting of Tyler and five others. Buoyed by the arrival of additional missionaries, Charles Derry worked even harder, preaching and converting in both England and Wales. A publication, the *Restorer*, a sixteen-page monthly published in Folk Welsh and English at Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, soon followed. Elder Derry finished his mission to England on 21 June 1864. His hard work had paid rich dividends. During Derry’s tenure five mission districts had been created, and the Reorganized Church had gained a solid foothold in Great Britain.<sup>53</sup>

During his administration as president of the European Mission George Q. Cannon acted as a spokesman for the Church. He represented the Church’s position to the non-LDS audience in Europe through two principle channels: the *Millennial Star* and various non-LDS newspapers

in the British Isles. Perhaps the best example of his role as spokesman is his response to Darwinism. Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* had been published in 1859. Darwin's thesis stated that all living animals and plants had evolved from earlier forms and that species were a result of natural selection. The implications for religion seemed clear. If Darwinism is literally correct, man was not created by God, but was only a biological organism, another form of animal life. President Cannon recognized the implications of Darwinism and the theory of evolution. There is substantial historical evidence to prove that he read *Origin of the Species*. In the front of his journal for 1862 there are several pages containing financial transactions. Following these financial records and preceding the first regular diary entry for 1862 are some notes from Darwin's famous book. The heading reads: "High Rate of Increase—Darwin in the Origin of Species, page 67." This heading is followed by several paragraphs of notes on the subject indicated.

George Q. Cannon's formal response to Darwinism, printed in the *Millennial Star*, had been preceded by other editorials in that periodical. For example, the lead editorial for 25 February 1860 is on the subject of "Creation" and stresses creation by "that creative Intelligence by which it was organized." President Cannon's editorial entitled "The Origin of Man," which appeared in the *Millennial Star* in October 1861, contains one of his most powerful and eloquent statements. He begins by noting that "the origin of the human race is a subject that has of late been warmly discussed." He then summarizes the theories proposed by several ethnologists and zoologists of the day. Finally, he introduces Darwin:

Last, but not least, comes the Darwinian theory of "natural selection." In his recent work upon the "Origin of Species," Darwin proceeds upon the hypothesis that there have been no special creations of separate species of either vegetable or animal forms of life, but that external conditions, such as variations of climate and food, domestication or cultivation, natural habit, volition, and co-adaptation, &c., will account for all the changes and varieties observable in the different classes of vegetables and animals existing on the globe, whether on the land, in the sea, or in the air.

Having surveyed the theories of the day, President Cannon began his refutation: "But the chief, wide distinction that exists between man and all the different classes of animals, from the lowest to the highest, lies in his mental and moral capacities. In his spiritual endowments man stands pre-eminent and alone." He develops his case, using the scriptures and statements from modern prophets, including Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and concludes:

Taking the doctrine of man's origin as seen from this higher point of view, and comparing it with the low assumptive theories of uninspired men, such as those we have alluded to, how great the contrast appears! "Look on this picture"—Man, the offspring of an *ape*! "And on this"—Man, the image of

*God, his Father!* How wide the contrast! and how different the feelings produced in the breast! In the one case, we instinctively shrink with dread at the bare insinuation; while in the other, the heart beats with higher and warmer and stronger emotions of love, of adoration, and praise; the soul is cheered and invigorated in its daily struggles to emancipate itself from the thralldom of surrounding evils and darkness pertaining to this lower sphere of existence, and is animated with a purer and nobler zeal in its onward and upward journey to that Divine Presence whence it originally came.<sup>54</sup>

George Q. Cannon had started a lifelong study of the origin of man. He continued to study, write, and publish on this topic until the time of his death. In the *Deseret News*, the *Juvenile Instructor*, the *Journal of Discourses*, and in other Church publications, he frequently expressed his ideas on the origin of man. On one occasion, for example, he wrote: "Adam was no gorilla, no squalid savage of doubtful humanity, but a perfect man in the image of God."<sup>55</sup> On another occasion, he made this affirmation: "It cannot be a question with any person of faith in our Church as to the origin of man. . . . We descended from God."<sup>56</sup>

Elder Cannon also published articles in English newspapers. Hoping to reach the largest possible audience, he faithfully represented the position of the Church on issues of the day. On 20 August 1861, he wrote to John Thomas Dexter, thanking him for publishing his remarks at a London conference in *The Christian Cabinet*.<sup>57</sup>

In his multifaceted roles as publisher, emigration agent, Church and mission administrator, and Church spokesman, George Q. Cannon made a very significant contribution to the growth of the kingdom. This contribution was not made without considerable personal sacrifice. His mission necessitated his absence from some of his family and also took a heavy toll on those family members who accompanied him to England. His wife Elizabeth traveled with him to the mission field in 1860, and two of their children, Georgiana and George H., were born in England. In 1863, Elder Cannon decided to send Elizabeth and the children home because of her poor health and troubles related to the Civil War. The children became ill while crossing the plains. Georgiana died during the journey, and George H. died shortly after arriving in Utah. It should be noted that Elder Cannon's first son, George Quayle, had died earlier.<sup>58</sup> Regarding the death of his children, he wrote: "It is a source of grief to me; but I have been led of late to call upon the Lord to prepare me for every trial."<sup>59</sup> George Q. Cannon was willing to make such sacrifices because of his fervent testimony of the Restoration. He expressed it best in his first address to the Saints following his return from England:

I rejoice exceedingly in the knowledge God has given to me that this is his Work—that he has established it never more to be thrown down, and that it is his mind and will it should roll forth and increase until it fills the whole earth.<sup>60</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Beatrice Cannon Evans and Janath Russell Cannon, eds., *Cannon Family Historical Treasury* (Salt Lake City: George Cannon Family Association, 1967), 34 (hereafter cited as *Treasury*).

<sup>2</sup>*Treasury*, 34–35.

<sup>3</sup>Jerrold L. Newquist, ed., *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Zion's Book Store, 1957), 1:xxi–xxiii.

<sup>4</sup>Lawrence R. Flake, "George Q. Cannon: His Missionary Years" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1970), 147–67. This is an exceptional dissertation. It provided an excellent foundation for my own study. Since its completion, additional source materials have become available which Flake did not have access to.

<sup>5</sup>Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 5:493.

<sup>6</sup>Flake, "Missionary Years," 182.

<sup>7</sup>Anthony Wood, *Nineteenth-Century Britain, 1815–1914* (New York: David McKay Co., 1962), 256–61.

<sup>8</sup>Donald Q. Cannon, "A Prophecy of War," in *The Doctrine and Covenants*, vol. 1 of *Studies in Scripture*, ed. Robert C. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Sandy, Utah: Randall Book Co., 1984), 335–39.

<sup>9</sup>George Q. Cannon, Journal, 16 July 1861, Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). These journals provide unusual insight into the life and thought of George Q. Cannon.

<sup>10</sup>David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), 67–70.

<sup>11</sup>George Q. Cannon to Brigham Young, 31 May 1861, cited in Flake, "Missionary Years," 186.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>13</sup>Cannon, Journal, 4 January 1864.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 16 July 1861.

<sup>15</sup>*Millennial Star* 26 (28 May 1864): 346.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.* 26 (6 February 1864): 83.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.* 26 (9 January 1864): 19.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* 25 (2 May 1863): 275.

<sup>20</sup>B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church* 5:270.

<sup>21</sup>*Millennial Star* 24 (5 April 1862): 213, 216.

<sup>22</sup>Loretta Lea Hefner, "The Apostasy of Amasa Mason Lyman," (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1977), 75–87.

<sup>23</sup>Loretta Lea Hefner, "Amasa Mason Lyman, the Spiritualist," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979): 87.

<sup>24</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 9:137–38.

<sup>25</sup>Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830–1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 81.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 81–83.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>28</sup>Cited in Flake, "Missionary Years," 221.

<sup>29</sup>Cannon, Journal, 4 January 1864.

<sup>30</sup>Flake, "Missionary Years," 222.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>33</sup>Cannon, Journal, 21 April 1862.

<sup>34</sup>Richard J. Dunn, "Dickens and the Mormons," *Brigham Young University Studies* 8 (Spring 1968): 325, 332.

<sup>35</sup>Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 232.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>38</sup>Cannon, Journal, 19 April 1864.

<sup>39</sup>William G. Hartley, "The Great Florence Fitout of 1861," *BYU Studies* 24 (Summer 1984): 341–71.

<sup>40</sup>British Mission Manuscript History, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>41</sup>Cannon, Journal, 6 October 1861.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 13 October 1861.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 25 August 1861.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 11 August 1861.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 20 July 1861.

<sup>46</sup>Journal History, 31 December 1862, 3–4.

<sup>47</sup>Cannon, Journal, 21 October 1863.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 5 September 1862.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 12 September 1862.

<sup>50</sup>Norma Derry Hiles, "Charles Derry: A Palimpsestic View," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 4 (1984): 22–24.

<sup>51</sup>*The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 4 vols. (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1896), 3:384 (hereafter cited as *RLDS History*).

<sup>52</sup>Cannon, Journal, 6 February 1863.

<sup>53</sup>*RLDS History* 3:398–403.

<sup>54</sup>*Millennial Star* 23 (19 October 1861): 652–54.

<sup>55</sup>*Juvenile Instructor* 9 (31 January 1874): 30.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid. 27 (1 December 1892): 720. LDS interest in the question of evolution has not been limited to George Q. Cannon. From 1859 until the present there have been vocal spokesmen on both sides of the issue. An excellent summary of this discussion is found in Richard Sherlock, "A Turbulent Spectrum: Mormon Reactions to the Darwinist Legacy," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 33–59. A collection of many Church leaders' statements on evolution is found in Reid E. Bankhead, comp., *The Fall of Adam, The Atonement of Christ, and Organic Evolution* (Levan, Utah: RAM Books, 1978).

<sup>57</sup>Cannon, Journal, 20 August 1861.

<sup>58</sup>Joseph J. Cannon, "George Q. Cannon," *Instructor* 80 (January 1945): 13–14.

<sup>59</sup>Cannon, Journal, 9 February 1864.

<sup>60</sup>*Journal of Discourses* 10:341.

# Charles W. Penrose: The English Mission Years

Kenneth W. Godfrey

“In those days there were giants on earth,” wrote the editor of the *Improvement Era* as he paid tribute to Charles William Penrose on his ninetieth birthday.<sup>1</sup> Upon President Penrose’s death, half a decade later, George H. Brimhall published a poem in the same magazine, one stanza of which reads:

The songs that owe him their birth,  
We sing as if our own.  
In fields of thought that gird the earth,  
We reap where he has sown.<sup>2</sup>

Charles W. Penrose was indeed a giant among men, and thousands of descendants of his British converts do, in fact, reap the harvest from the gospel seeds he planted. His last name symbolizes, in a rather dramatic way, the life he seemed destined to live. *Pen*, in the Cornish language, means *head*, while *Ros* means *valley*, and Charles became one of the heads, or chiefs, in the “valleys of the mountains.” A well known Cornish couplet reads, “By Tre, Ros, Pol, Lan and Pen, you may know most of the Cornish men.”<sup>3</sup> It is the purpose of this essay to reintroduce Latter-day Saints to one of the Church’s finest leaders, greatest thinkers, most gifted writers, and first-rate proselyters.

Elder Penrose’s full-time service in Britain exceeded that of every other Latter-day Saint missionary. His first mission alone lasted a full decade, and later calls brought the total to more than seventeen years. In addition, he was a prolific writer for newspapers, a politician of enormous influence, and a gifted poet. During his last two decades, long after most men have retired, he was called to be an Apostle and later a counselor in the First Presidency. Yet he was first and foremost a missionary from the moment he experienced the new birth of baptism until he drew his last breath seventy-seven years later. This study will focus on Charles W. Penrose’s four missions in Great Britain, which together spanned almost sixty years of that mission’s history. He began his first mission in 1851 and ended his last in 1910.

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Kenneth W. Godfrey is Utah North Area Director for the LDS Church Educational System.

Charles W. Penrose, the son of tin mine owner Richard Penrose, was born in the London suburb of Camberwell on 4 February 1832. His mother, Matilda Sims, a highly-educated woman of culture, took great pride in teaching her only son. She was also a devout Baptist who freely imparted to him her religious views, and took him with her to Sunday School and other meetings. A precocious boy, Charles learned to read before reaching the age of four and also committed many scriptural passages to memory. When he was four, his mother enrolled him in Sunday School, and the superintendent assigned him to the beginner's class. But when it became known that he could already read, he was promoted two classes, where he studied the Old and New Testaments with young people much older than himself. His learning was so unusual that his father frequently took the young boy to London's pubs where he would place him on a table and have him read aloud the daily newspapers, to the delight of the patrons. His mother had taught him to read in a very dramatic way that only increased the impact of this unusual ability. He also entertained at Baptist socials by reciting from memory long and difficult passages of scripture using this same style. He began writing essays and poetry at an early age and lived to see this talent flourish until he became one of the Church's most powerful writers and gifted poets.<sup>4</sup>

While still in his teens, Charles began a systematic study of the various Christian religions, comparing their beliefs with those found in the New Testament. He reached the conclusion that God would not "invent so many different and conflicting denominations."<sup>5</sup> At this time he began his search for the one true church. As he was nearing his seventeenth birthday, he began reading a book about American Indians. In one section of the volume, the writer described Joseph Smith's telling Indians the history of the Book of Mormon. His curiosity aroused, Charles began to investigate both the Church and the Book of Mormon. After study, pondering, and prayer, he received a manifestation from the Holy Ghost that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was "a perfect reproduction of the church established by Jesus Christ . . . [with] the same Divine authority . . . the same promises and the same powers."<sup>6</sup> Though his family tried to dissuade him, his faith was sure, and on 14 May 1850 he was baptized by Joseph Timmons. Alone that night, after having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, he prayed that for the remainder of his life the Lord would make the "truth plain to me as it was before Him."<sup>7</sup>

The Book of Mormon, stimulating his interest in the American Indians, led him to write his famous poem, "Great Spirit, Listen to the Red Man's Wail," which is said to have been his first published verse.<sup>8</sup> He would later write at least two other poems about native Americans.<sup>9</sup>

Only six weeks following his baptism, Charles was ordained a deacon and six months later, 6 January 1851, was called on a mission and

ordained an elder. His family objected to his mission call, and he was also offered a good position in the British government if he would forsake his proselyting labors.<sup>10</sup> Undeterred, Charles responded to the summons from the Lord and was told by the man who had ordained him an elder, George B. Wallace, that “It is expected of the elders of Israel in these last days, that they will wear themselves out in the service of God, and it is better to wear out than to rust out.”<sup>11</sup>

Taking not a penny with them and only the clothes they wore, Charles Penrose and his companion, Elder Pursie, set out on foot for their field of labor, Maldon, in Essex. They were charged to break new ground and build up branches of the Church where there had been none before. After walking all day, with feet bleeding, they could find no lodging, and for the first time in his life Charles slept outdoors. Finally arriving in Maldon, they spent the night, hungry and tired, sleeping on a strawstack. The next morning Elder Pursie was so discouraged that he went home, leaving Charles alone. Still not having had anything to eat and very distraught himself, Charles approached a wealthy man and said, “I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, sent out into the world to preach the Gospel.” The man replied, “Give Him my compliments,” and walked away. The young missionary, humiliated at having to beg, finally found a lady who gave him a drink of water and allowed him to sit down in her living room. As he lifted the liquid to his lips, Charles could control his emotions no longer and began to weep.

On 12 March 1854, he remembered those first days in Maldon and wrote in his diary:

In the morning before I arose, I layed and reflected upon the passed three years, from the time I entered Maldon . . . without a farthing or a friend but the Lord. I then came into the very house where I was laying. Then there was not a saint in the town and in that same house . . . I was [now] as it were, surrounded by friends.<sup>12</sup>

Charles began to keep a diary on 1 January 1854, while laboring in Boxford, Suffolk. He had already served three years of what was destined to be a continuous ten-year mission. In his first entry he records that he had preached three sermons that day and found the Saints “dull of Spirit” and extremely poor, longing to be gathered to Zion. However, his own zeal was undaunted, and at times he even wrote his testimony in the snow with the tip of his umbrella (5 January 1854). Each morning he would wash himself from “head to feet,” regardless of where he spent the night (5 January 1854). His days were taken up in caring for branch and conference business, preaching to Saints and investigators, writing articles for the *Millennial Star*, studying Latin, French, and algebra, and playing the flute. He attended the theater at every opportunity and not only enjoyed the plays but was also preoccupied with scenery and stage production. Fond of art, he also frequented England’s finest galleries.

Although he was a small man weighing only 147 pounds, he walked so much that he had to cut away part of the inside of his boot because his bones had grown out (12 March 1854). His work and dedication were so noticeable that a Brother Squires prophesied in a January 1854 meeting that Charles would never want for bread nor lack for friends because of what he had done for the work of God (19 January 1854).

Charles frequently attended meetings held by other churches after which he would hand out Mormon tracts and invite the people to his own meetings (21 February 1854). He also called on those ministers who wrote newspaper articles and pamphlets against the Church, causing at least one to acknowledge that he [the minister] was a “weak creature very liable to err” (13 April 1854). Charles also found time to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits, and he won the honor of being the “highest baptizing Elder” in the conference (27 September 1854). In 1854 he met, converted, and fell in love with Lucetta Stratford. His diary frequently notes visits to her home, and on 21 January 1855 they were at the registrar’s office, “united in the holy bonds of matrimony.” Charles thought Lucetta looked beautiful, but he felt “shabby.” After Charles had preached a number of sermons that same day, the newlyweds went to her father’s house where Charles wrote in his diary, “I was united to one whom I loved sincerely, and she returned the feeling with fervor.” Two days later they traveled by train to Brentwood where they were met by a boy with a donkey cart who took them and their boxes to Dorsette and their “humble” dwelling (23 January 1855). In August 1855 Charles and Lucetta were married again, “according to the order of the Church,” by Elder Kimball (15 August 1855).

Charles continued to write poems and songs throughout this period. As early as the middle 1850s, he had sung his own composition, “I’d Be a Mormon,” in many Latter-day Saint meetings. Late in 1855, he was asked by Elder Kimball to write a song that would promote the new plan of crossing the plains by handcart. The very next morning after having received the request, he sang to a large assembly of Saints his newly composed hymn, “The Handcart,” to the tune, “Be in Time” (29 December 1855). He describes it as being very well received. Only a few days later he wrote another song called “Jolly Wagoneer,” that was also widely used to encourage the Saints to cross the plains by means of handcarts.

On 2 May 1856, while Charles was making “himself ready to preach at Ferling,” Lucetta “was taken in labor.” Though she begged him to stay with her, he “stealed” his heart and left her in the care of her mother. After teaching a discussion, delivering a speech before a large audience, and getting lost on the way home, Charles finally arrived at 12:30 A.M. to find that his wife had delivered a baby boy an hour after his departure. The baby was small, having arrived a month too soon. Only

two months later he again left his wife to attend to his missionary duties, in spite of the fact that his infant son was very ill. After preaching to and then baptizing and confirming several people, he walked home and on the way was informed of the death of his child (21 July 1856). The news was a terrible shock to Charles because he had had “full faith that the boy would live.” Entering his home, he found his wife “overcome with sorrow” and his son “beautiful in his sleep with death.” Their mourning was muted with the knowledge they possessed that, if faithful, they would after the resurrection “educate him in the principles of salvation.”

Having been a full-time missionary for more than half a decade, Elder Penrose began to have frequent dreams of emigrating to the Great Basin. He longed to live with the Saints and was completely converted to the doctrine of gathering. While walking along a dusty Essex road one day, he began to contemplate the Zion he had only read and heard about, a Zion with wide streets and clear streams of water on each side, shadowed by rows of shade trees, and banked by majestic mountains. “I could,” he wrote, “see it in my mind’s eye, and so I composed a song as I walked along the road.” When he arrived in Mundon, he held a cottage meeting and sang his newly written song to the tune of “Oh, Minnie, Dear Minnie, Come over the Lea.” This was the first rendition of his famous hymn, “O Ye Mountains High.”

Many years afterwards he reported with satisfaction that the song seemed to impress and please Brigham Young.<sup>13</sup> He also sang the song at a meeting in August of 1856, where he first met Elder Ezra T. Benson. This began an association with Apostle Benson that would change the course of Charles W. Penrose’s life.

Early fall of 1856 found the British missionaries often in grave danger. On one occasion, while delivering a sermon, Elder Penrose “was pulled off the heap” and mobbed. After being roughly handled and set free, he, together with other elders, was pelted with stones, most of which struck the ground making sparks fly around their feet. The mob, he says, continued to yell like devils. On another occasion, when he had been threatened by a group numbering more than a thousand, Charles wrote in his diary that he knew no fear because he was engaged in the cause of the Lord (10 September 1856).

By the time his ten-year mission drew to a close, Elder Penrose had established a reputation as a gifted, powerful speaker who could discourse for an hour and a half without using any notes. He had memorized the scriptures and knew how to use them to support his doctrine. He also had a wonderful sense of humor and could keep audiences laughing for as long as he wished. For example, he once described a plum pudding as “rather a cobbler paste with a raisin here, there and away over yonder” (30 August 1863). On another occasion, after having heard the humorist Artemus Ward speak about his visit to

Salt Lake City, Charles wrote, "Some of his jokes were stale and some fresh, so fresh there was no flavor to them" (19 November 1866). His excellent essays were constantly in demand by Orson Pratt for publication in the *Millennial Star*. Furthermore, he had consistently baptized more people and had served longer than any other elder in the mission. He had also presided with distinction over the London, Cheltenham, Herefordshire, and Birmingham conferences.

Just before his 1861 missionary release, a situation arose that greatly troubled Elder Penrose. A missionary, unnamed, began to circulate "a sort of quiet slander" against him. There was not a word of truth to the story, and it greatly angered him. He said he had grown used to the enemies of the Church accusing him of all sorts of mischief, but it cut him "to the heart" to have a Church member slander him. Instead of retaliating, he sat down and wrote the poem "School Thy Feelings, O My Brother." The writing of the poem, which was later put to music, seemed to calm Elder Penrose, and he was able to forgive the offending missionary while continuing to love and serve God.<sup>14</sup>

Leaving Great Britain and all his family behind, save his wife, Charles Penrose, in charge of 620 passengers, came to the mountains high, first settling in Farmington, Davis County, and then moving to Cache Valley at the request of Ezra T. Benson, where he married a second wife, Louisa Lusty. He also founded a business and was called as a home missionary, frequently traveling with Apostle Benson himself. He had been in Utah for only three years when he was called at the April 1865 general conference to serve another British mission. Before departing he was asked to preach in the tabernacle, and as he finished his discourse and sat down, President Brigham Young said loud enough for the whole congregation to hear, "Amen, that's a good sermon" (20 May 1865).

After crossing the plains, being beset by both Indians and mosquitoes, Elder Penrose traveled by boat under rather primitive conditions, because there were many more passengers than berths, and arrived in England on 11 September 1865. After a warm bath and a change of linen, he was assigned by President Daniel H. Wells to labor in Manchester. However, he was given permission to visit his mother and sisters before beginning his assignment. Elder Orson Pratt also gave him a book containing the Pratt genealogy, much of which Elder Penrose had collected for the Apostle from British museums many years before. When he came to the house where he and Lucetta had lived when they were first married, his homesickness overcame him, and he wrote that night, "My heart seemed to swell, a great pain was at my heart and with difficulty I kept back the tears which came welling to my eyes" (15 September 1865).

During this period he wrote several articles for the *Millennial Star*. In "The Everlasting 'Now,'" he points out the problems of those people

who live only in the memory of the past, as well as those who live only in anticipation of the future, and argues that “it would be much better for both these classes of individuals to bring their minds to bear upon things of the present.”<sup>15</sup> In “Particular Providence,” he argues that God does intervene in the affairs of men and that the Latter-day Saints, especially, have had unmistakable evidence of this “special providence” on their behalf. He cites the miracle of the seagulls and the crickets as exhibit A.<sup>16</sup> In “The Righteousness of Christ,” he contends that while we are redeemed by the “righteousness of Christ,” we must accept the saving ordinances and follow the commandments the Lord has revealed through prophets to obtain eternal life.<sup>17</sup> In yet another essay he advocates the idea that Church doctrine should be judged by its effects. He states that Mormonism assures its believers of having a knowledge of the truth; it abolishes the fear of death and produces peace of mind. The restored gospel, he says, makes men free, gives them hope, and demonstrates that communities can exist and thrive in areas of the world thought to be barren and worthless. He declares, “ ‘Mormonism’ is a stem planted by the hand of the Lord, watered by the ‘blood of the Saints and Prophets.’ . . . Its roots are striking deeper every day.”<sup>18</sup> Elder Penrose’s writing in these essays is clear, his prose correct and concise, and his positions sound. He had the rare ability to “dash off an article while others were thinking about it.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, he always seemed to quote scripture correctly. Reporters who checked his quotes found “every word as it should be.”<sup>20</sup>

Before going to Manchester Elder Penrose “gave away” his sister Celia at the altar of St. Mary’s Church as she married Charles Parker (27 August 1865). In October he composed a song entitled “My Loved Ones at Home” and saw it published in the *Star*. It was while on this mission that he wrote what he considered to be his finest poem, “The Latter-day Kingdom.” This poem, containing thirty-three stanzas, contrasts the restored gospel with the kingdoms of past ages and proclaims the grandeur that yet awaits the “little stone cut out of the mountain without hands.” The last eight lines read:

Such is the kingdom now on earth begun!  
A branch of the great governmental tree  
Whose roots are grounded in the Central Sun,  
Whose boughs bear fruit through all eternity.  
Happy are they who labor in its cause,  
Happy are they who suffer for its cause;  
For all who are obedient to its laws,  
Of all its joys and honors will partake.<sup>21</sup>

Like the poetry of the *Women’s Exponent*, Charles Penrose’s works are sometimes “superficial, bland, unimaginative, derived from known forms and themes, spelling out its message in language more akin to

prose than to poetry except for a self-conscious adherence to rhyme and rhythm.”<sup>22</sup> However, in spite of their literary shortcomings, his poems do reflect his deep commitment to the gospel and the future glory he foresaw if one were diligent in proclaiming its message. His hymns were better than his poems; in 1865 he composed still another, sung to the tune of “Annie Laurie,” called “Song of the British Saint” (28 December 1865).

After serving for only two months, Elder Penrose was called to be the president of the Essex conference. When he arrived to conduct his first meeting, the Saints greeted him “with long continued applause” (28 December 1865). He not only spoke and sang in conferences but he also visited people he had baptized on his first mission who were “neglecting their meetings” (8 January 1866), often receiving their promise that they would do better. After one meeting he reported that he felt dull and empty but asked the Lord “for his spirit as another witness for the truth and it rested upon me powerfully so that I spoke to my own edification and the comfort of the Saints” (25 May 1866). One Sunday, 4 November 1866, he delivered a sermon regarding the practical duties of the Saints and then visited with a Brother Bennee, who had brought a young man to the meeting who proved to be David Gibson, who had been missing for more than three years. Gibson reported that on his way to conference he had been “knocked on the head” and robbed of conference money. This, together with the news he had just received of his wife’s infidelity, preyed upon his mind and caused him to enlist in the army. After rising to the rank of corporal, he contracted brain fever which left him totally deaf, and he was discharged. President Penrose conversed with him by writing in the deaf and dumb alphabet (4 November 1866).

In the spring of 1867 Charles Penrose became the assistant editor of the *Millennial Star* and began full-time work in the mission office. It was his duty not only to write articles but to get the *Star* ready for printing as well (29 June 1866). He also renewed his friendship with Apostle Franklin D. Richards, who had succeeded Daniel H. Wells as European Mission president. The fall of 1867 found Charles taking an extended tour of the Church’s missions on the European continent. He was shocked at what he found among non-Church members in France but enjoyed the rest of his tour.

By the spring of 1869 Charles Penrose had been away from his two wives and numerous children for three years. He had learned of both the poverty of his companions and the death of one of his children. In May, after he had written an article for the *Star* entitled “Zion, Past, Present and Future,” he was invited to Franklin D. Richards’s lodgings for tea. “After beating around the bush for awhile,” Elder Richards said “he thought we would not be called home this year.” He told Charles that he could not get along without him and was convinced that he could do more good there than at home. Charles replied that he thought “three years was enough for

any man to be away from home . . . that my family was in a condition that my presence was needed." Elder Richards "looked vexed but said no more" (25 May 1868). By June, Elder Richards told Charles that he could go home, and he began making preparations to do so. But before departing he was assigned to go on a speaking tour of Ireland where, in a street meeting attended by three thousand people, he declared, "There is one Lord and one Faith and one Baptism." Whereupon he heard a heckler call out, "Yes, and one wife," raising a general laugh in which Charles joined (19 July 1868). He answered questions about the Church in response to articles that had appeared in the Belfast *Telegraph*, as well as speaking on one occasion over the sound of the Salvation Army band which was playing nearby.

After his return home, Charles Penrose became a newspaper editor, politician, and one of the most influential men in the territory. In 1885 he was sent to Washington, D.C., with Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., to try to persuade the new President-elect Grover Cleveland to support statehood for Utah.<sup>23</sup> While in the East, to avoid arrest for practicing plural marriage, Charles was called on still another mission to England. On 24 February 1886, just a step ahead of federal officers, he boarded the *Wyoming*, went into his "cramped little stateroom and kept quiet." By March he had arrived in England and was set apart to preside, once again, over the London conference, assist the president of the mission, and write for the *Millennial Star*. Within a few months he wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Only True God;" was involved in a great uproar in Ireland; accompanied President Wells on a tour of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, and Switzerland; and heard his song "The Loved Ones at Home" sung by Angel Croft at a spring concert. This mission lasted for only a year before he was summoned home to assume his duties as managing editor of the *Deseret News*.

Home again, he wrote his "Rays of Living Light" series, was set apart as assistant Church historian, and in July of 1904 was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In 1906 he was appointed to succeed Heber J. Grant as president of the European Mission. He left for England on 20 October, taking his third wife, Dr. Romania B. Pratt, with him. In his diaries of this mission he always refers to her as the doctor. During the journey he was suffering from injuries to his left hand and knee, the result of a fall in Salt Lake City. By using alcohol he was able to reduce the swelling and the pain as he traveled east. Upon his arrival in England he spent the first days purchasing furniture for the new mission home and visiting with his sisters and aged mother. In response to articles in the *Improvement Era* by B. H. Roberts and Nels L. Nelson's book *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism*, he answered the missionaries' questions regarding the "Eternity of Ego" (2 May 1907). Thus he began to develop an opinion regarding this topic that would change the course of the

argument for years to come. He regarded the Roberts–Nelson position that intelligence was individual as speculation unfounded in scripture. He did not mind such ideas being taught as long as they were properly labeled. As for himself, he preferred to teach only that which could be clearly justified from the scriptures, and his position would later be adopted by the First Presidency.

President Penrose's first presidential editorials in the *Millennial Star* were devoted to commenting on a number of articles that had appeared in the Belfast *Evening Telegraph* concerning the Latter-day Saints. It seems that the Reverend Hugh Murphy had delivered a series of sermons on "The State of the Soul after Death" that were remarkably similar in their content to Latter-day Saint doctrine. President Penrose noted the similarities and declared that the Church had been teaching such concepts for more than seventy years.<sup>24</sup> In a follow-up editorial entitled "The Duality and Unity of Man," he wrote that "man's real identity is that which is spirit, for which on earth this body is prepared." He declared that

man is composed of a rational, permanent, spiritual personality, incorporated in a body framed out of earthly elements in which he gains experience and an understanding of the grosser things in the cosmos that he could not otherwise obtain, that these elements can and will be quickened and made immortal like the "glorious body of the Son of God," and that the intelligent, responsible, spiritual entity will have to account for "the deeds done in the body."<sup>25</sup>

During his presidency he considered publishing the Book of Mormon with the characters from the Anthon transcript on the flyleaf. He also found time to answer questions relating to Nephi's killing Laban and God's seemingly harsh dealings with ancient peoples (7 March 1907). In April he wrote to Professor Nelson and stated his objections to some things found in *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism* (18 April 1907). When a Church member was to be ordained a deacon but was, instead, ordained a priest by mistake, President Penrose said that the intent of the elder acting as mouth was what was important, not the actual words. The man was a deacon. The branch supported the President's view, but the deacon–priest left the Church over the matter (14 February 1909).

Other *Millennial Star* editorials were devoted to encouraging the missionaries to develop better habits in their proselyting efforts. President Penrose told them that they should not waste time and that pleasure and recreation must be set aside, so as to accomplish the important work of proclaiming the gospel. Personal comfort and convenience were not to stand in the way of duties to be performed. Not one hour should be wasted, and idleness, lassitude, and inactivity avoided. He urged missionaries, further, to be willing to labor where assigned and to be clean in their person as well as in their quarters. At a district

conference attended by large numbers of Saints and nonmembers alike, President Penrose declared and supported from the Bible the view that while no man had the right to add to that which God revealed, God had the right to add whatever he desired to communicate. It was reported that “intense interest was taken in the discourse.”<sup>26</sup>

In a fine editorial printed in the 10 February 1910 issue of the *Star*, President Penrose responded to numerous questions he had received about “seeming contradictions” found in the scriptures. He argued that the scriptural passages must be taken in context and that the purpose of the writer should also be taken into consideration. Some scriptural language, he said, was meant to be taken figuratively, and it was folly to interpret such passages in a literal sense. He urged the Saints to refrain from dwelling upon isolated expressions or taking the precise language of the author literally. When a reader understood the writer’s intent, the context in which a passage was written, and the circumstance that caused the writing, President Penrose believed contradictions would, for the most part, vanish.<sup>27</sup> The next issue of the *Star* contained an editorial entitled “Give Credit to Whom Credit Is Due,” a strong statement for honesty in citing one’s sources.<sup>28</sup> His St. Patrick’s Day editorial was titled “Mormonism and Scientific Thought.” In it he defended the position that the beginning spoken of in Genesis, chapter one, might have been thousands or even millions of years before the earth was organized. He said there is nothing in the text that states how long a period intervened between when God said “Let there be light” and when the light appeared. “It may,” he wrote, “have been ages upon ages of our time.” He believed it was possible that this earth had been constructed from fragments of other worlds or bodies that had revolved in space for eons and by attraction became involved in a greater mass. Referring to the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Penrose stated that “create” merely meant to organize and that the world was not made from nothing. He was convinced that the elements were eternal, and that the earth was organized from elements just as a statue is created from preexisting marble.<sup>29</sup> This is a remarkable, farsighted piece of writing that allows much space for all men to ponder, speculate, and think about the earth’s creation without feeling restricted or restrained, so long as what they teach is not directly contradicted in the scriptures.

Elder Penrose concluded an April editorial on the translation of the Bible by stating that although the Bible, in the main, is a correct reproduction of the sayings of the ancient prophets and Apostles, yet the translation is, in some respects, imperfect. Therefore, he argued, the Book of Mormon is to be preferred because it was translated by the gift and power of God.<sup>30</sup> While he cited a number of examples which he believed demonstrated some incorrect Bible translation, the editorial was, in the main, a plea for trust in all the scriptures, in spite of the fact

that the Old and New Testaments, in their present form, at least, do not contain the “direct word of God to Man.” Writing in June he commented on an article that had appeared in the *London Magazine* on things Egyptian found among the Mayan civilization in Central America. The author had come to the conclusion that somehow the Mayans had influenced the Egyptians. President Penrose argued that the reverse was true and saw the article as yet another evidence for the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

His valedictory editorial published in June contained a summary of his four-year term as European Mission president. He had written many articles for the *Star* as well as tracts and books. At least twice a year he had visited the conferences in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. He had also visited Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and Norway. He had enjoyed good health, and 3,646 people had come into the Church in Britain alone during his presidency. An additional 8,500 had been baptized in Europe.

Thus he ended more than seventeen years of full-time missionary service in Great Britain. It is doubtful that any other Latter-day Saint had spent, or would later spend, more years in building up the Church in that land than did Charles W. Penrose. The Church in England would not have been what it was, or is, without his wonderful missionary labors. It is somewhat ironic that he was able to convert thousands, yet his own family remained outside the fold. They loved and respected him and were even in awe of his speaking and writing abilities, but they could not believe in his message. He alone had responded to the Shepherd’s voice.

Charles Penrose’s later elevation to the Church’s First Presidency only increased the influence he had among British Saints. He was, perhaps, one of the three or four most influential English converts, and if longevity is a criterion he was without a doubt the greatest missionary ever to serve in that land. The testimony he bore late in his life gives a true insight into the spirit of this remarkable man:

God has blessed me with His spirit throughout my ministry. When He called I bowed in obedience to His will, and am thankful for every opportunity for service in His Church. The best thing I can say to you is to put your trust in the Lord and be willing to keep His commandments and God will be with you whether in joy or in pain, on the land or on the sea, on hill-top or where ever you may be. The great time to learn things of worth and truth is now at hand. Learn that which will make you useful, happy, kind, patient and charitable. All these things are from God. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness,” so Jesus Christ taught, “and all other things will be added unto you.”

May peace abide with you and the Spirit of God be always in your hearts.<sup>31</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>"Ninetieth Anniversary of Prest. Charles W. Penrose," *Improvement Era* 25 (February 1922): 358.
- <sup>2</sup>George H. Brimhall, "In Memory of President Charles W. Penrose," *Improvement Era* 28 (July 1925): 811.
- <sup>3</sup>Annie Lynch, "Builders of the West: Charles W. Penrose," *New West Magazine* (1925): 35.
- <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup>Charles W. Penrose, *Poems*, comp. Ruth McQuarrie Penrose (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1950), 7.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup>Charles W. Penrose, in Conference Report, April 1922, 32.
- <sup>8</sup>Lynch, 35–36.
- <sup>9</sup>See "The Lamanite's Prayer," *The Millennial Star* 17 (25 August 1855): 544, and "The Lamanites," *Millennial Star* 18 (6 September 1856): 575.
- <sup>10</sup>Edward Anderson, "Charles W. Penrose," *Improvement Era* 15 (February 1912): 341.
- <sup>11</sup>Charles W. Penrose, in Conference Report, October 1922, 28.
- <sup>12</sup>Charles W. Penrose, Diary, 12 March 1854, Utah Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited parenthetically).
- <sup>13</sup>Lynch, "Builders of the West," 37.
- <sup>14</sup>Orson F. Whitney, "A Hymn with a History," *Improvement Era* 27 (October 1924): 1109.
- <sup>15</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "The Everlasting 'Now,'" *Millennial Star* 27 (14 November 1865): 689–91.
- <sup>16</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Particular Providence," *Millennial Star* 28 (1 September 1866): 557.
- <sup>17</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "The Righteousness of Christ," *Millennial Star* 28 (22 September 1866): 596–99.
- <sup>18</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "'Mormonism' Judged by Its Effects," *Millennial Star* 28 (24 November 1866): 737–40.
- <sup>19</sup>"Tribute to Charles W. Penrose on His Birthday," *Relief Society Magazine* 12 (June 1925): 7.
- <sup>20</sup>Sherry Anderson Lindsay, interview with Joseph Anderson, Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>21</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "The Latter-day Kingdom," *Improvement Era* 21 (April 1918): 482.
- <sup>22</sup>Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "Poetry and the Private Lives: Newspaper Verse on the Mormon Frontier," *Brigham Young University Studies* 25 (Summer 1985): 56.
- <sup>23</sup>William C. Seifrid, ed., "To Get U[tah] in U[nion]: Diary of a Failed Mission," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 51 (Fall 1983): 358–81.
- <sup>24</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Adopting Mormon Doctrine," *Millennial Star* 72 (13 January 1910): 24.
- <sup>25</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "The Duality and Unity of Man," *Millennial Star* 72 (20 January 1910): 43.
- <sup>26</sup>Albert McCann, "Special Services," *Millennial Star* 72 (3 February 1910): 77.
- <sup>27</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Ancient Scripture and the Living Spirit," *Millennial Star* 72 (10 February 1910): 89.
- <sup>28</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Give Credit to Whom Credit Is Due," 72 (24 February 1910): 120–22.
- <sup>29</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Mormonism and Scientific Thought," 72 (17 March 1910): 168–70.
- <sup>30</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "As Far As Translated Correctly," *Millennial Star* 72 (5 May 1910): 280–84.
- <sup>31</sup>Penrose, "Preface," in *Poems*, 8.



A map of Sheffield, 9 May 1840  
(from Ordnance Survey 1, Sheet 82, Chesterfield)

# Historians' Corner

Edited by Ronald W. Walker

We feature in this issue's Historians' Corner a letter written by Elder Parley P. Pratt to President Joseph Smith. Written from Manchester, England, in late 1841, the letter provides a window through which we can view the religious setting of early Victorian times. It is, of course, a personal perspective. Parley Pratt, an early Mormon convert, preacher, pamphleteer, missionary, and Apostle, was one of the first evangelists of his faith dispatched to Great Britain. As such, his words convey the wonder of his new environment. Perhaps as significant, they also carry a hint of that introspective, otherworldly melancholy that was common to the man.

The letter is ably edited by David H. Pratt, an associate professor of history at Brigham Young University. Professor Pratt, incidentally, is a descendant of Parley P. Pratt.

## Oh! Brother Joseph

David H. Pratt

Urban England, particularly Manchester in 1841, personified all that was wrong with this earth to a millenarian. Parley P. Pratt came to England with the majority of the Quorum of the Twelve in 1840 and went to Manchester in April to edit the *Millennial Star*. After the initial conversion rate of the first year, which must have seemed like a harbinger of the millennium, Pratt was left to preside over the missionary work while the other Apostles returned to Nauvoo. He was to reside for another year and a half in Manchester during one of its stormiest periods.

Manchester was the crown jewel of the Industrial Revolution. However, the concomitants of industrial progress in the early nineteenth century were overcrowding, disease, and crime. Manchester's growth rate was over 40 percent between 1811–31. By 1851, more than 70 percent of the population had been born outside of Manchester.<sup>1</sup>

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David H. Pratt is an associate professor of history at Brigham Young University.

Frequent migration was necessary to maintain a population where the average age at death was computed by a government report in 1842 to be seventeen for a laborer and thirty-eight for the upper classes in contrast to thirty-eight for an agricultural laborer and fifty-two for the gentry in a rural county.<sup>2</sup>

Manchester's mills rose from one or two employing 1,240 workers in 1790 to sixty-six mills with 51,800 hands by 1821. Families were packed into older, frequently damp housing where one privy might be shared by thirty households.<sup>3</sup> A French visitor dramatically summed up the Manchester of 1844: "You hear nothing but the breathing of the vast machines, sending forth fire and smoke."<sup>4</sup>

Trade cycles were not new to Manchester, but the severity of the economic crisis of 1837–41 was. The bank failure of 1837 in the United States, overproduction of cotton goods, foreign tariffs and competition, plus a series of bad harvests combined to stifle industry. Food prices rose while wages were cut by 20 to 25 percent. Out of a total population of 353,390, some 50,000 hands were unemployed or underemployed in the summer of 1837. By March 1842, 116 factories and mills and 681 shops and offices had been forced to close their doors.<sup>5</sup>

It is in this context that we must first view Parley P. Pratt's letter to Joseph Smith, written on the eve of the year which a modern historian has branded the gloomiest in the entire nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Pratt's "Millions of Laborers" in the first paragraph is rhetoric, but based on substance. Of greater historical importance is the reference to the status of the converts and the missionary tool of "humbling the rich and exalting the poor." It was probably such a technique that led to the inclusion of Mormons along with some interesting bedfellows—socialists and Chartists—as the focus for attack by the monthly propaganda piece, which Pratt mentions as an afterthought.

More information is needed on contemporary opinion of Mormons. Did the English consider them as another dissenting religion or as a social movement allied to similar causes? What were the sources and who were the molders of these opinions? Location could be one factor. Since at least July 1840, Mormon meetings had been regularly held in Carpenter's Hall. Faucher does not mention Mormons in his study of Manchester, but he does perceptively note that "As to religious sects, the latest imported is generally the most acceptable."<sup>7</sup> However, the editorial comment on Faucher's essay rounds out one theme of how Mormons, Chartists, and socialists might have been connected in the public eye.

As closely connected with the state of religion in Manchester, we may mention "Carpenter's Hall," and the "Hall of Science." The first is the Sunday resort of the Chartists. They open and close their meetings with the singing of democratic hymns, and their sermons are political discourses on the justice of democracy and the necessity for obtaining the charter. The

second is an immense building in Camp Field, raised exclusively by the savings of the mechanics and artisans, at a cost of £7,000, and which contains a lecture-hall—the finest and most spacious in the town. It is tenanted by the disciples of Mr. Owen. In addition to Sunday lectures upon the doctrines of Socialism, they possess a day and Sunday-school, and increase the number of their adherents by oratorios and festivals—by rural excursions, and by providing cheap and innocent recreation for the working classes. Their speculative doctrines aim at the destruction of all belief in revealed religion, and the establishment of community of property; and they are vigorously opposed by the evangelical portion of the religious public.<sup>8</sup>

The remainder of Parley P. Pratt's letter indicates his millennial expectations. The six questions have a note of crescendo about them as he warms to the theme of the millennial signs. The closing paragraphs echo the first six verses of section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been retained.

Manchester, Dec. 4th 1841

Dear Brother Smith,

I take this opportunity to communicate with you, and would say that my self and family are all Well, and We wish health and peace and favour to rest abundantly upon you and your family and all the household of faith. We Rejoice greatly in the continual good news Which We hear from the Land of Zion, and in the spirit of faith, union, confidence, enterprise and industry Which seems to prevail and increase in your midst. We Rejoice in the Building of the temple and feel great desire to push it foward. You will doubtless get the Letter I sent last and you will there see What my mind has been on that subject for some time and I find that it is in perfect accordance with the spirit of the Lord in Nauvoo, viz. to push the Temple ahead with all posible speed, and I hope it Will be enclosed by next fall. Br Fielding and my self will continue to foward according to our ability, and will endeavour to Influence others So to do. But O! Br. Joseph Millions of Laborers are out of employ, and are starving in this country, and among others hundreds of the most faithful Saints, and hundreds more are laboring like slaves on about half what they can eat. This pains my heart, and I sometimes feel as if I could take them all on my shoulders and upon my arms and carry them to Zion; but allass, the means is Wanting. Yet we are enabled to Work the deliverance of many by humbling the rich and exalting the poor. But Dear Br. the saints in this country are nearly all poor and there is no capital among them as it were; therefore they cannot fulfil your epistle in Regard to men of capital coming first to prepare the way for the Rich will not hear nor obey the Gospel, and the poor must flea or perish, and if they perish they had rather perish Where provisions cost about one sixth part what they cost here. Yea, most gladly would they sell them selves for slaves to their Brethern in America for the sake of a being on the earth, but no one will buy them. (That is hire them, and advance them Money to go with.)

Dear Br be so kind as to write me a few lines in answer to this letter, and give me a word of encouragement, and advise, for I get no letters from America either from you or any one else, eccept one of late from Elder G. A. Smith. Do not fail to write this once as I have never Rec'd a letter from you since I have been in this Land.

And now I would ask advise on several points.

first, I would wish to come home in the spring and stay till the temple is done, if it is wisdom.

secondly, have you any advise to give as to any farther provision for the care and government of the Churches in this Land in my Absence, and in the absence of the Residue of the quorum?

thirdly, any Advise or instructions in Regard to gathering of the saints from this Land?

fourthly, any instructions as to the spread of the message to other Nations?

fifthly, When Will The "purchased possession" be Redeemed and the temple and city commence in Jackson Co. Mo.

sixthly, When Will the ungodly, lying, Gentiles begin to loose their Power and ceace to Rule; and We who have now spent half of our lives for them, be privaledged to turn from the Gentiles and go in full power to the Remnants of Joseph and Israel?

Now Dear Br, If you will answer this Letter the same night you get it and answer these six questions, and impart such other Advise or instruction as god may give you it will be a great Blessing to me.———

as to news, the Lord is still working in power and signs in this land. Many of the sick are healed, many have visions, some in Dreams, and some in Open day. the ministering of Angels is frequently enjoyed, and in short all the gifts of God are frequently manifesterd, as far as they have been generally ~~attended to~~ attained to, in this age.

The Church is Generally in union, and increasing in Confidence, and in Numbers; but it makes but slow progress because of the lying spirit Which every Where prevails, and the priestcraft and false doctrines Which are like a flood around us. Discussions, Contentions, Lectures, Sermons, play cards, tracts, Books, Papers pamphlets, etc. etc. are flooding the Country in Great number, all contaning Little else than Lies and foolishness of the Grossest kind aganst the Cause of truth. There is now a monthly periodical of a large size Published jointly against us, and the Socialests, and Chartists.

in short, it is wearysome to notice the multitude of Evle and Lying publications, much more to answer or Reply to them. We therefore pass them in silence With few ecceptions, and the Lord answers them in his own time, and in his own way, by Bringing them to Naught and by doing his own work.

The wickedness and folly of the priests and their followers is incredible; it is beyond every thing, language cannot tell it. And I feel as though it must come to an end soon, very soon, and the servants of God be Delivered, and this yoak broken off from their necks; I am really impatient I cannot bear with them much longer, the Spirit which is in me cries; come out in judgement Spedily O, God, and cause their Wickedness and falsehood to cease, and let the cause of truth triumph and thy Saints Rejoice. Why Should thy servants be wasted a way and their lives cease from the earth or their time gone, till Old age come upon them While the wicked Still bear Rule, and the cause of truth is in Reproach. How long O, Lord—How Long!

Dear Br, Do enquire of the Lord how long we ~~must~~ must see the Gentiles triumph and hear, and bear their Reproach. When Shall the power of falsehood Cease to prevail, and the Lord come out of his hiding place, and make bear his Arm in the eyes of the nations, in behalf of his own Cause, and his own people?

Do not be angry with your old friend for earnestly seeking this knowledge, or some information on the subject of these times, for I feel to humbly solisit at your hand a word on these subjects. In the mene time be assured that you have my love and best Wishes, and give the Same to all enquiring friends.

I Remain your Brother in the cause  
of truth.

P. P. Pratt.

President. J. Smith.

All the American friends in this country are well as far as I know.

P. P. Pratt<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>J. J. Tobias, *Urban Crime in Victorian England* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 157, 166.

<sup>2</sup>The report is summarized briefly in F. Roy Willis, *Western Civilization: An Urban Perspective*, 2 vols. (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1973), 2:672.

<sup>3</sup>François Vigier, *Change and Apathy: Liverpool and Manchester during the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), 129, 134.

<sup>4</sup>Leon Faucher, *Manchester in 1844: Its Present Condition and Future Prospects* (1844; reprint, London: Frank Cass and Co., 1969), 18. Faucher's visit may have been hasty and his information secondhand, but he is insightful. The editorial comments, which were designed to be a corrective by the local translator, are frequently even more useful and add to the contemporary assessment of Manchester rather than detract. It must be kept in mind that this was the same Manchester that motivated Engels to write.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 141, 147. Editorial silence on the main points while haggling over weekly average earnings and pawn tickets supports the dangerous situation in which Manchester found itself during these years.

<sup>6</sup>Asa Briggs, *The Making of Modern England, 1783–1867: The Age of Improvement* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 295.

<sup>7</sup>Faucher, *Manchester in 1844*, 22–23.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>9</sup>Joseph Smith Collection, Letters, incoming, 1832–44, Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

*The Leading Edge* magazine announces the

## 1988 ART CONTEST

*Prizes:* \$100 total; top three winners receive cash prizes. *Deadline:* 15 January 1988. *Submission Requirements:* Artwork must be: (1) science fiction or fantasy related; (2) appropriate for publication in *The Leading Edge*; (3) black and white, line or halftone, camera ready. Submit only high-quality copy or photostat of original artwork. Artwork should be matted in gray tones but should not be framed. Submissions will not be returned. *Submission Instructions:* All artwork must be labeled with title, if any, and entrant's full name and address. Include phone number if desired. Mail or deliver to Art Contest, *The Leading Edge*, 3163 JKHB, Provo, Utah 84602.

The Brigham Young University  
Science Fiction Symposium announces the

## Odyssey Poetry Contest

*Prizes:* The first place winner will receive \$200. Cash prizes for second and third places will also be awarded. *Deadline:* Entries must be received no later than 28 January 1988. *Additional Rules:* (1) All entries must be original works. Entries may not have been previously published. (2) Entries must be typewritten. Spacing is determined by the form of the poem. (3) Send copies, not originals. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish your entry to be returned. (4) Please provide cover sheet with your name and address. Do not put your name on the same sheet as the poem itself. Title or at least number the poem. (5) All entries will be considered for publication in one of two publications, *Brigham Young University Studies* or *The Leading Edge*. If you do not want your entry to be considered for publication in one or both of these publications, please indicate this on the cover sheet. Absence of such instructions will be taken as consent. (6) Entries will be judged by a panel of published poets. Decisions of the judges are final. (7) Winners of each contest will be individually notified by mail. (8) Send all entries to The Odyssey Poetry Contest, 3163 JKHB, Provo, Utah 84602.

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