"Lord, Roll on Thy Work"
The World of Joseph Fielding
1797-1863

Preface

Joseph Fielding, my direct-line ancestor, was one of seven LDS missionaries sent by the Prophet Joseph Smith to England in 1837. At this time, Joseph began a journal which detailed his four years as a missionary, including two years as the British Mission President. He continued the journal as he lived in Nauvoo and later in Utah. As I created a historical context for his journal entries, the length of the work increased far behind my initial expectations. I did not anticipate finding family letters and other documents which allowed me to cover the lives of his sisters Mary and Mercy Fielding, both of whom were widowed during the early years of the Restoration.

Through Fielding family letters, it became evident that Joseph's older brother James, a minister of a large congregation in Preston, was intently following the actions of Joseph's Canadian study group, offering direction and guidance. James Fielding ultimately rejected his brother's teachings of the Restored Gospel, siding with his brother-in-law Timothy Richards Matthews. These two ministers became great persecutors of the LDS Church and its missionaries.

Joseph Fielding began his mission in England at the same time his youngest sister Mercy lived in Canada while her husband served as a missionary. At this time, their sister Mary settled in Kirtland. On Christmas Eve of 1837, she married the recently widowed Hyrum Smith.

In the spring of 1838, the apostles who had accompanied the first missionary group to England returned home, leaving Joseph Fielding in charge of the British Mission. Through Joseph's eyes, we see how the missionary work grew in England. At the same time, we read as he did of the severe trials in Missouri through letters across the Atlantic. His relief is palpable when in early 1840 apostles finally returned to England, an event for which he waited with great faith.

As much as possible, I have used the voices of the Fielding siblings from their own writings.

I have used a 20th century typed transcript of the original Joseph Fielding diary. In referencing this document and all others, I have infrequently made slight corrections to spelling or punctuation to enable a passage to read more easily. In no case have I changed or altered the intended meaning in any way.

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