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Abstract: Specific plans to preach the restored gospel in the west matured during the second conference after Church organization, held late September, 1830. The missionary theme was prominent during the three-day duration of this conference. The official minutes summarize what was probably the first missionary farewell in LDS history: “Singing and prayer in behalf of Brother Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jr., who were previously appointed to go to the Lamanites.” The Ohio labors of Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and their companions doubled the membership of the Church and created a solid nucleus for rapid growth and a secure, if temporary, gathering location. One must assess the impact of these four men in four weeks with a certain awe.



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The Impact of the First Preaching in Ohio

RICHARD LLOYD ANDERSON*

Specific plans to preach the restored gospel in the west matured during the second conference after Church organization, held late September, 1830. Members gathered near Waterloo, New York, to transact business for an essentially New York Church of fewer than a hundred members. Even before the conference assembled at the Whitmer home in Fayette township, a revelation was given to the "second elder" regarding a proposed mission to Indian territory just west of Missouri:

[T]hou shalt take thy journey among the Lamanites. And it shall be given thee from the time that thou shalt go, until the time that thou shalt return, what thou shalt do. And thou must open thy mouth at all times, declaring my gospel with the sound of rejoicing.¹

During the conference a revelation formally designated Peter Whitmer, Jr. as junior companion to Oliver Cowdery in this mission.² Oliver Cowdery was then Mormonism's most eloquent spokesman, standing next to Joseph Smith in Church government and in prominence as a witness of the early visions. The importance of the western mission is evident from the fact that he headed it.

This conference set significant precedents for Church administration. However, the missionary theme was prominent during its three days duration. The official minutes not only give the date of convening as Sept. 26, 1830, but also sum-

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¹Book of Commandments 30, also D&C 28. The mission was inspired by Book of Mormon promises to the Indian descendants of its Lamanite race.

²Book of Commandments 32, also D&C 30.

marize what was probably the first missionary farewell in LDS history: "Singing and prayer in behalf of Brother Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jr., who were previously appointed to go to the Lamanites."³

Two companions were soon added, Ziba Peterson and the dynamic Parley P. Pratt, neither of whom are mentioned in the September conference minutes. Pratt had been converted by reading the Book of Mormon and talking at length with Hyrum Smith and other Book of Mormon witnesses. After Oliver Cowdery baptized him "about the first of September, A.D. 1830," Parley P. Pratt then travelled some 200 miles east to Columbia County, New York, where he baptized his brother Orson on September 19 and soon left to return to Church headquarters.⁴ Pratt later recalled details:

Returning to western New York the same autumn, I saw for the first time Joseph Smith, the Prophet, at his father's house in Manchester, heard him preach, and preached in his house, at the close of which meeting we baptized seven persons. After this he inquired of the Lord, and received a revelation appointing me a mission to the west, in company with Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Ziba Peterson. We started this mission in October, 1830.⁵

The first printing of the revelation calling Pratt and Peterson confirms the October 1830 date and promises, "I myself will go with them and be in their midst—and I am their advocate with the Father, and nothing shall prevail."⁶ Such words do not overstate the power of their preaching in Ohio. The October departure appears in another source, Peter Whitmer's unsophisticated but tersely eloquent survey of their mission: "The word of the Lord came unto me by the Prophet Joseph Smith on the tenth month, saying, "Peter, thou shalt go with thy brother Oliver to the Lamanites. We started on the same month to the west . . ."⁷

In outfitting these men for their long journey, the women of the Church played an unpublicized role. Joseph Smith men-

³Far West Record, typescript, p. 2.

⁴"History of Parley P. Pratt," *Deseret News*, May 19, 1858. For Orson Pratt's recollection of his brother's visit and his baptismal date (Orson's birthday), see "History of Orson Pratt," *Deseret News*, June 2, 1858.

⁵"History of Parley P. Pratt," *Deseret News*, May 19, 1858.

⁶D&C 54 (1835 ed.), also D&C 32:3 (present ed.).

⁷Journal of Peter Whitmer, Jr. The quoted revelation paraphrases both the September and October revelations referring to him.

tioned that "preparations were made for the journey of the brethren"; his mother was more specific:

As soon as this revelation was received, Emma Smith and several other sisters began to make arrangements to furnish those who were set apart for this mission with the necessary clothing, which was no easy task, as the most of it had to be manufactured out of the raw material. Emma's health at this time was quite delicate; yet she did not favor herself on this account. But whatever her hands found to do, she did with her might, until she went so far beyond her strength that she brought upon herself a heavy fit of sickness, which lasted four weeks.⁸

Loved ones were left behind. Thankful Halsey Pratt lived in the Peter Whitmer, Sr., household while her husband filled his missionary call.

Pratt's autobiography sets departure as "late in October."⁹ This harmonizes with a remarkable document from an unusual source. The Methodist preacher Ezra Booth was converted after the first missionaries left Ohio; in his short career as a skeptical Mormon he gathered information to expose the Church. His "inside story" was printed in the *Ohio Star* during the last three months of 1831, and principally contained his many complaints and doubts concerning his mission to Missouri earlier that year. The source is filled with hearsay and sarcastic narrative (a technique certain to distort history); however, the Booth letters are the first printed source for the revelations of Joseph Smith, mostly reproduced in short extracts. Booth obviously could quote documents without eroding them with his acrid bias. His quotations are generally accurate, particularly the fairly long revelation calling Oliver Cowdery on the Lamanite mission.¹⁰ (Revelations were circulated in private copies before the first printed edition in 1833; Joseph Smith recalled one presented to the western missionaries: "a copy of the revelation was given them.")¹¹ Since Booth responsibly copied the Oliver Cowdery revelation, an associated document very probably originated

⁸Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith* (Liverpool, 1853), p. 169. Minor editorial modifications are made in this quotation and others in the article, restricted to spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

⁹Parley P. Pratt, Jr. (ed.), *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (New York, 1874), p. 49.

¹⁰Book of Commandments 30, D&C 28.

¹¹"History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4 (1843), p. 172, also Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (2d ed.; Salt Lake City, 1964), p. 120.

from a manuscript source. It is a covenant of cooperation among the four missionaries, filled with faith and humility in the face of their challenging task:

Manchester, Oct. 17, 1830

I, Oliver, being commanded of the Lord God to go forth unto the Lamanites to proclaim glad tidings of great joy unto them by presenting unto them the fulness of the gospel of the only begotten son of God, and also to rear up a pillar as a witness where the temple of God shall be built in the glorious New Jerusalem; and having certain brothers with me who are called of God to assist me, whose names are Parley, Peter, and Ziba, do therefore most solemnly covenant before God that I will walk humbly before him and do this business and this glorious work according as he shall direct me by the Holy Ghost, ever praying for mine and their prosperity and deliverance from bonds and from imprisonments and whatsoever may befall us, with all patience and faith. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY

We, the undersigned, being called and commanded of the Lord God, to accompany our brother Oliver Cowdery to go to the Lamanites and to assist in the above mentioned glorious work and business; we do therefore most solemnly covenant before God that we will assist him faithfully in this thing by giving heed unto all his words and advice which [are] or shall be given him by the spirit of truth, ever praying with all prayer and supplication for our and his prosperity and our deliverance from bonds and imprisonments and whatsoever may come upon us, with all patience and faith. Amen.

Signed in presence of

JOSEPH SMITH, Jr.
DAVID WHITMER

P. P. PRATT
ZIBA PETERSON
PETER WHITMER¹²

Paul-like, the four missionaries walked eighty miles west to Buffalo, where they spoke to an Indian group about The Book of Mormon as a record of their ancestors, and left copies with those who could read. But the most dramatic scene of the mission opened 200 miles further west near Cleveland, Ohio. Parley P. Pratt earlier had been converted to the Disciples' movement when the noted Sidney Rigdon had come into Pratt's

¹²Letter of Ezra Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, Nov. 24, 1831, Nelson, Ohio, cit. *Ohio Star* [Ravenna], Dec. 8, 1831. The bracketed "are" is an editorial replacement of "is," and the names of witnesses have been put in a separate column.

neighborhood west of Cleveland (Lorain Co.) in 1829. Now the tables were turned as Pratt sought out Sidney Rigdon with a more thorough-going restorationism than Rigdon had once presented Pratt. The Mormon Elders arrived in Rigdon's locality to declare new revelations, and the recreation of the spiritual power enshrined as a dead letter in the Bible. Rigdon and scores of careful Bible readers were affected.¹³

In a few short weeks the restored Church of Christ had as many members in Ohio as in New York. The earliest sources agree on the number of conversions. The short "journal" of eyewitness Peter Whitmer, Jr., was written in 1831 and summarizes the Ohio phase of the mission: "there we declared the fulness of the gospel and had much success. We baptized 130 members." Written the same year, the opening lines of John Whitmer's history are similar:

They journeyed as far west as the state of Ohio, and through the divine influences of the Holy Spirit, by the assistance of the Lord they built a branch of the church in Geauga County, state of Ohio, which consisted of about 130 members.¹⁴

The most spectacular conversion was Sidney Rigdon, and no source captures his recollections more authentically than the "History of Joseph Smith," written and published while Rigdon was available for consultation and criticism.¹⁵ There were searching expectations in the circles about Sidney Rigdon, but his was "the first house at which they called." The noted preacher was polite but "very much prejudiced" to hear that the Book of Mormon was an additional revelation to the Bible. Pressed in discussion, the seasoned minister declined to argue but promised: "I will read your book . . . and will endeavor to ascertain whether it be a revelation from God or not."

¹³For Rigdon's pre-Mormon convictions of restorationism, see A. S. Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve* (Cincinnati, 1875), pp. 191-5, 209-10, and also F. Mark McKiernan, "The Conversion of Sidney Rigdon to Mormonism," *Dialogue*, Vol. 5 (1970), 71 ff.

¹⁴The Book of John Whitmer, ms. p. 1. The same figure was given in the *Evening and the Morning Star*, April, 1833, a newspaper of which Oliver Cowdery was co-editor; see n. 71 *infra*. Lyman Wight's Journal, discussed later in the article, also gives "130 members"; see n. 37 *infra*. Pratt's Autobiography, p. 50, gives the number of baptisms as "127 souls." John Whitmer's location of Kirtland in Geauga County was correct at the time he wrote, though it is now in Lake County.

¹⁵Cf. the prefacing remark to the very detailed biography and conversion account: because of irresponsible beliefs about Rigdon, a "correct account" of his life will be given "from authentic sources." The most accessible authentic source was Rigdon himself. *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4 (1843), p. 172.

During the next "fortnight" the missionaries returned "occasionally" to find an earnest searcher reading the Book of Mormon, "meditating on the things he heard and read," and also "praying to the Lord for direction." Finally convinced, he counted the cost (which was considerable) and fearlessly submitted to baptism.¹⁶

Of Parley P. Pratt's statements recounting this notable conversion, the most specific supplements the Rigdon history just summarized:

About the 15th of Oct., 1830, I took my journey, in company with Elder O. Cowdery and Peter Whitmer to Ohio. We called on Elder S. Rigdon, and *then for the first time*, his eyes beheld the Book of Mormon; I myself had the happiness to present it to him in person. He was much surprised, and it was with much persuasion and argument that he was prevailed on to read it. And after he had read it, he had a great struggle of mind before he fully believed and embraced it.¹⁷

In later life the conversion force was still powerful in the mind of a man who had known more than his share of disillusionment. President A. W. Cowles of Elmira College visited Sidney Rigdon in 1868 and soon after reported the interview, though with the condescending style of the religious journalist. The former Mormon leader remembered receiving the Book of Mormon and his impressions on investigating it:

Rigdon solemnly affirms that this was his first personal knowledge of Joe Smith and the Mormons. After a few days Cowdery returned and held a long interview with Rigdon. Rigdon had read a considerable portion of the book. He questioned Cowdery about Smith and found that he was entirely illiterate. Rigdon expressed the utmost amazement that such a man should write a book which seemed to shed a flood of light on all the old scriptures, open all their profoundest mysteries, and give them perfect consistency and complete system. In his fresh enthusiasm he exclaimed that if God ever gave a revelation, surely this must be divine.¹⁸

Rigdon's respect for the Book of Mormon message is confirmed by family traditions from his son, John W. Rigdon. When informed that Joseph Smith was a young man with

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 289-90, also Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 122-125.

¹⁷Parley P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled* (New York, 1838), p. 41.

¹⁸A. W. Cowles, "The Mormons," *Moore's Rural New Yorker*, Jan. 23, 1869, p. 61. "Entirely illiterate" is likely Cowles' phraseology, not Rigdon's.

"hardly a common school education," the well-read minister replied: "if that is all the education he has got, he never wrote this book."¹⁹ Other issues besides the message of the Book of Mormon are prominent in Sidney Rigdon's conversion, apparent from a detailed contemporary account published in early 1831 over the initials M.S.C. The author was probably Matthew S. Clapp, a young and capable convert of Sidney Rigdon to the Disciples' movement in Mentor—the article reveals the Mentor congregation's experience in the conversion of their pastor.²⁰ Here the testimony of the Book of Mormon witnesses is stressed, for the missionaries "related the manner in which they obtained faith";—through prayer, "and an angel was shown unto them," an apparent reference to Oliver Cowdery's vision.²¹ Beyond the Book of Mormon, another great issue was the source of authority to teach and baptize. "M.S.C." relates that the missionaries insisted upon rebaptizing their converts—and after "seventeen persons were immersed by them in one night," the missionaries "came next day to his house" to find a "much displeased" Sidney Rigdon, negative because he had already immersed his followers in a covenant of remission of sins.²² Pratt recalled the resolution of the problem:

At length Mr. Rigdon and many others became convinced that they had no authority to minister in the ordinances of God, and that they had not been legally baptized and ordained. They therefore came forward and were baptized by us, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands and prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.²³

The conversion of Sidney Rigdon rested upon the double

¹⁹John W. Rigdon, Lecture on the Early History of the Mormon Church, ms. at the LDS Historian's Office. Cf. the similar lecture notes held by the Rigdon family and published by Karl Keller, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1 (1966), p. 24—cf. pp. 41-2.

²⁰Orson Hyde mistakes the middle initial but identifies locality in writing of the year 1829, when he "returned to Mentor and spent one season with a young man by the name of Matthew J. Clapp, at his father's house, where the public library was kept." ("History of Orson Hyde," *Deseret News*, May 5, 1858.) Sidney Rigdon and Orris Clapp, Matthew's father, were neighbors, according to the 1830 census. For the education and religious zeal of young Clapp, see Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples*, pp. 193, 195, 197 ff.

²¹"Mormonism," *Painesville Telegraph*, Feb. 15, 1831. This article is the source behind E. D. Howe's account in *Mormonism Unveiled* and also the main source for Hayden's account in *Early History of the Disciples*. A convenient copy of the "M.S.C." source is in Francis W. Kirkham's valuable *New Witness for Christ in America*, Vol. 2 (rev. ed.; Salt Lake City, 1959), p. 80 ff. Other articles cited are at p. 41 ff.

²²*Painesville Telegraph*, Feb. 15, 1831.

²³Pratt, *Autobiography*, p. 50.

thrust of new revelation and restored authority, a combination quite evident in the contemporary newspaper reports. For instance, the first *Painesville Telegraph* story of the mission specifically named "Cowdray" and his teaching:

About two weeks since some persons came along here with the book [of Mormon], one of whom pretends to have seen angels and assisted in translating the plates. He proclaims destruction upon the world within a few years, holds forth that the ordinances of the gospel have not been regularly administered since the days of the apostles till the said Smith and himself commenced the work . . . In the neighboring township of Kirtland, we understand that twenty or thirty have been immersed into the new order of things, many of whom had been previously baptized.²⁴

At their first interview the missionaries had requested Rigdon's permission to speak to the Mentor church. The open-minded leader agreed, with the following result:

The appointment was accordingly published, and a large and respectable congregation assembled. Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt severally addressed the meeting. At the conclusion Elder Rigdon arose and stated to the congregation that the information they had that evening received was of an extraordinary character and certainly demanded their most serious consideration [H]e would exhort his brethren to . . . give the matter a careful investigation and not turn against it without being fully convinced of its being an imposition, lest they should possibly resist the truth.²⁵

The Mentor congregation had been created under the leadership of Rigdon, whose vigorous views of the restoration of the primitive gifts went beyond Campbellite concepts. John Murdock, brother-in-law of the Clapps in the Mentor congregation, shared these views. A Campbellite minister living near Warrensville (southwest of Kirtland), he heard of Rigdon's investigation and other Mormon conversions as he was on his way to fill a Sunday preaching appointment. An initial angry reaction turned to curiosity, and by the following Thursday he traveled 20 miles to Kirtland to hear the new message for himself. Pratt's *Autobiography* mentions the general excitement "in Kirtland, and in all the region round about" at the news of the

²⁴*Painesville Telegraph*, Nov. 16, 1830.

²⁵*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4 (1843), pp. 289-90, also Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 124.

Book of Mormon and revelations surrounding its origin: "The people thronged us night and day, insomuch that we had no time for rest or retirement." Some came "for curiosity, some to obey the gospel, and some to dispute or resist it."²⁶ Murdock's more detailed autobiography portrays these situations: constant news about "the new preachers," his own journey to Kirtland, with opponents of the Mormons determined to keep him from reaching Kirtland or dissuading his interest when there, and the intense day and night conversations with the missionaries. John Murdock already believed in the literal restoration of primitive Christianity, so the essential question was whether the Mormon missionaries were imposters or authentic servants of God:

I said, if it be so, their walk will agree with their profession, and the Holy Ghost will attend their ministration of the ordinances, and the Book of Mormon will contain the same plan of salvation as the Bible. . . . I did not ask a sign of them by working a miracle . . . For I did not believe that the spirit would attend their ministration if the Book of Mormon was not true, neither if they were not sent forth of God.²⁷

Murdock remembered that night as "the first confirmation meeting that was held in Ohio."²⁸ Although he did not attend, he carefully questioned a half-dozen who had been confirmed: "I found their testimony agreed on the subject that there was a manifestation of the spirit attended the ministration of the ordinance of laying on hands . . ."²⁹ In the meantime he formed a first impression of the motives of Oliver Cowdery and a Campbellite opposer:

And I watched the spirit of each one of them in their conversation, and I found that Goodwell bore down with warmth, whereas Cowdery wished not for contention and endeavored to evade controversy.³⁰

While the confirmation meeting was held, Murdock read the Book of Mormon; when the group returned, "the spirit of the Lord rested on me, witnessing to me of the truth of the work."³¹

²⁶Pratt, *Autobiography*, p. 50.

²⁷John Murdock, *Autobiography*, p. 12.

²⁸Ibid, p. 13.

²⁹Ibid, p. 16.

³⁰Ibid., p. 13.

³¹Ibid, p. 15.

The next morning he requested baptism, which was performed by Parley P. Pratt in the Chagrin River:

And the spirit of the Lord sensibly attended the ministration, and I came out of the water rejoicing and singing praises to God and the Lamb. An impression sensibly rested on my mind that cannot by me be forgotten. . . . This was the third time that I had been immersed, but I never before felt the authority of the ordinance. But I felt it this time and felt as though my sins were forgiven. I continued with the brethren till Sunday, at which time they preached in Mayfield and baptized a number. And on Sunday evening they confirmed about thirty. I was one of the number.³²

Murdock gave the date of his baptism as Nov. 5, so the Mayfield meeting just mentioned was Sunday, Nov. 7, and Levi Hancock was probably there. Single and twenty-seven years of age, he heard the news of the four men with the revealed book from his brother, who mentioned a Sunday meeting and reported their practise of baptizing and bestowing the Holy Ghost:

At these last words I gathered faith, and there seemed to fall on me something pleasant and delightful. It seemed like a wash of something warm took me in the face and ran over my body, which gave me that feeling I cannot describe. The first word I said was, "It is the truth—I feel it. I will go and hear for myself tomorrow."³³

The next morning Hancock accompanied his family to Mayfield, taking his mother on the horse behind him. A crowd assembled there at the Jackson home:

I got in the chamber where there had been a few boards pulled up (which had been laid down loose before) to give the spectators a fair chance to hearing. In the chamber I took a seat beside a lawyer by the name of Card. He sat with his pencil and paper and commenced to scribble as the speaker arose and began to talk.

This first speaker was Parley P. Pratt, who told of Christ's ministry in the Book of Mormon, and afterwards stressed "that there must be something sent from God in order to prepare the people for the glorious reign of Christ."³⁴ Sidney Rigdon

³²Ibid., p. 16.

³³Clara E. H. Lloyd (ed.), *Journal of Levi W. Hancock* (n.d., n.p.), p. 23. Since Hancock describes further preaching at Mayfield, Nov. 7 is the Sunday that best fits the circumstances of his journal.

³⁴Ibid.

spoke next, apparently prior to his baptism, for he expressed doubt that he should preach again “and advised the people not to contend against what they had heard.” The final speaker was undoubtedly Oliver Cowdery:

[T]here arose another young man whose countenance bespoke a spirit of peace and love. He said he had been an eye witness to the things declared, and the book reported to be a revelation was truth, however strange it may appear to the people.³⁵

Levi Hancock’s father and sister were baptized that day, and the first of the week Levi followed the missionaries to Kirtland and requested baptism of Parley P. Pratt. Pratt’s *Autobiography* recalls that “meetings were convened in different neighborhoods,” and the Hancock record illustrates this. He returned to Mayfield with Oliver Cowdery’s promise to follow. Hancock and Lyman Wight spoke there on one evening, followed the next day by Cowdery, Peterson, and Whitmer. “They held meetings and baptized some, and in the evening they confirmed many members in the church.”³⁶

At this time Lyman Wight was in the midst of his own investigation of the Mormon claims, and his story illustrates how fully prepared for conversion a number in his circle were. Filled with a desire to comply strictly with the early Christian order, Wight, Isaac Morley, and others had entered into a covenant to hold “all things common.”

In conformity to this covenant I moved the next February [1830] to Kirtland, into the house with Bro. Morley. We commenced our labors together with great peace and union. We were soon joined by eight other families. Our labors were united both in farming and mechanism, all of which was prosecuted with great vigor. We truly began to feel as if the millenium was close at hand.³⁷

About the beginning of November, Wight had been appointed to move seven miles from Kirtland to Mayfield and take charge of five families who would become a branch of this society:

³⁵Ibid., p. 24.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Journal of Lyman Wight, cit. by the careful historian-grandson Heman C. Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence, Mo., 1951 reprint), Vol. 1, p. 153. Competent RLDS historians think that the original has perished. The passage also mentions [Titus] Billings as making the covenant, though the 1830 census places him in Mentor, not Kirtland. Wight and Morley both appear in Kirtland on this census.

When I had my goods about half loaded, there came along four men (namely P. Pratt, O. Cowdery, P. Whitmer, and Ziba Peterson) and brought with them the Book of Mormon, which they wished to introduce to us. I desired they would hold on till I got away, as my business was of vital importance, and I did not wish to be troubled with romances nor idle speculations. But nothing daunted, they were not to be put off, but were as good-natured as you please. Curiosity got uppermost, and I concluded to stop for a short time. We called meeting, and one testified that he had seen angels, and another that he had seen the plates, and that the gifts were back in the church again, etc. The meeting became so interesting withal that I did not get away till the sun was about an hour high at night, and it was dark before I arrived at my new home.³⁸

With pressing duties, Wight dismissed the episode by assuming that the missionaries would immediately travel on to Missouri. As discussed, however, they followed him to his new home of Mayfield. Wight despaired of giving full details of the elders' stay on the Western Reserve, but summarized: "I shall therefore content myself by saying that they brought the Book of Mormon to bear upon us, and the whole of the common stock family was baptized."³⁹

The four missionaries were not the only ones "who brought the Book of Mormon to bear." After his conversion trip to Kirtland and Mayfield, John Murdock returned to his home (Orange Township) to ignite interest in a new area:

I endeavored to bear testimony to my neighbors whom I met by the way, but they would not believe. At length I arrived home. My family gladly received me and my words, thank the Lord. And my wife and Brother Covey both believed the Book of Mormon, for I brought it home with me and read it to them, and I was filled with the spirit as I read. At length the first day of the next week arrived, and the New York brethren held meeting in Warrensville, four miles west of my house, and I bore testimony to the truth. My wife, Brother Covey, and three others were baptized. Brother Ziba Peterson held meeting in my house the evening before, and I bore testimony to my neighbors.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid. "Speculators" of the second sentence has been replaced with the "speculations" of the printing of this extract in the *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 29 (1882), p. 192. The *History* printing has been followed in retaining "withal" in the last sentence.

³⁹Ibid. "Of the" was probably accurately transcribed in the *History* and accidentally deleted in the *Saints' Herald* version.

⁴⁰Murdock, Journal, p. 17.

Kirtland was base of operations for the New York missionaries after their initial contact with Rigdon at Mentor. As Wight indicated, Kirtland was headquarters for Isaac Morley's "family," which attempted to live the early Christian economic order. Those who already believed in the experiences and programs of the Book of Acts were obviously ripe for a restored gospel. Through the New Testament they knew vividly of eyewitnesses of revelation, of religious leaders called by God and authorized by the laying on of hands, of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost (neglected by even Christian restorationists). The Rigdon-oriented official history gives an overview of the success with the Kirtland "family":

About two miles from Elder Rigdon's, at the town of Kirtland, were a number of the members of his church, who lived together and had all things common . . . to which place they immediately repaired, and proclaimed the gospel to them, with some considerable success. For their testimony was received by many of the people, and seventeen came forward in obedience to the gospel.⁴¹

This number corresponds to the seventeen baptisms that "M.S.C." claimed had at first offended Rigdon. In fact, by Nov. 16, the *Painesville Telegraph* editor had heard of "twenty or thirty" baptisms at Kirtland.⁴²

Rigdon's influence and presence was significant at Kirtland in the "fortnight" of his investigation. As a matter of fact, he was baptized there about Nov. 15, and his public profession at Kirtland touched many. "M.S.C." set his baptism on a Monday and reported the surrounding events with a tone of irony:

The Monday following he was baptized. On the morning of the preceding day he had an appointment to preach in the Methodist chapel at Kirtland. He arose to address the congregation *apparently* much affected and deeply impressed. He seemed exceedingly humble, confessed the sins of his former life, his great pride, ambition, vainglory, etc., etc. After he was baptized, he professed to be exceedingly joyful, and said he would not be where he was three days ago for the universe.⁴³

⁴¹*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4 (1843), p. 290, also Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 124. "Two miles," made more open in the *History*, might be accurate. Adjoining townships may be meant, not villages.

⁴²"The Golden Bible," *Painesville Telegraph*, Nov. 16, 1830.

⁴³"M.S.C." seems to eclipse Rigdon's investigation into a week, but may be quite correct in setting a Monday baptism, which fits into Pratt's recollection of

Parley P. Pratt evidently describes the same sermon in giving other details of Sidney Rigdon's baptism:

And when finally convinced of its truth, he called together a large congregation of his friends, neighbors, and brethren, and then addressed them very affectionately for near two hours, during most of which time both himself and nearly all the congregation were melted into tears. He asked forgiveness of everybody who might have had occasion to be offended with any part of his former life. He forgave all who had persecuted or injured him in any manner. And the next morning, himself and wife were baptized by Elder O. Cowdery. I was present—it was a solemn scene. Most of the people were greatly affected. They came out of the water overwhelmed in tears.⁴⁴

The firstfruits in Ohio were by no means confined to the Rigdon circle of disciples. An example of an outsider to these connections is Philo Dibble, newly married and 24, who had recently settled on land five miles east of Kirtland. By way of ridicule he was told "that four men had come to Kirtland with a golden Bible, and one of them had seen an angel." Dibble "did not feel inclined to make light of such a subject," however, but "thought that if angels had administered to the children of men again, I was glad of it; I was afraid, however, it was not true." The next morning he and his wife drove the carriage to "hunt up those strange men in Kirtland."⁴⁵ Since the missionaries were in Mayfield that day, Dibble and his wife returned

a two-day sequence. The official narrative of Rigdon's conversion specifies conviction a "fortnight" after receiving the Book of Mormon, and baptism shortly afterward. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4 [1843], p. 290; also Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 125.) In 1882 Heman C. Smith reported that his grandmother (widow of Lyman Wight) "told me a few days ago that she remembers distinctly that Sidney Rigdon was baptized the same day herself and husband were; but perhaps not by the same person, as there were several baptizing at the same time." (*Saints' Herald*, Vol. 29 [1882], p. 192.) The Wight journal sets the date of baptism of the Wights: "Myself and family were baptized by P. Pratt on the 14th of November, 1830, in Chagrin River, at Kirtland, Ohio." (*History of the Reorganized Church*, Vol. 1, p. 154.) A Monday baptism would make the actual date Nov. 15 and Mrs. Wight's recollection very significant but off by one day. Some personal histories imply a Rigdon baptism very early in the short stay of the missionaries, but none of these are firsthand and are only reporting the rumors that attended his first Mormon investigations. Cf. n. 21 and B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1930), Vol. 1, pp. 231-235.

⁴⁴Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled*, p. 41. The quote is a direct continuation of that cited in n. 17, *supra*.

⁴⁵"Philo Dibble's Narrative," *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City, 1882), p. 75.

the next day, accompanied by a neighboring family. They met the four New York missionaries:

I remained with them all day, and became convinced that they were sincere in their professions. I asked Oliver what repentance consisted of, and he replied, "Forsaking sin and yielding obedience to the gospel." That evening he preached at Brother Isaac Morley's and bore his testimony to the administration of an angel at noonday. He then dwelt upon the subjects of repentance and baptism and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, and promised that all who embraced these principles with honesty of heart should receive a testimony.⁴⁶

The meeting closed with Dibble, William Cahoon, and three other persons standing in response to Cowdery's invitation to indicate willingness for baptism. Against his wife's cautions, Philo Dibble was baptized and describes his elation afterward:

When I came out of the water I knew that I had been born of water and of the spirit, for my mind was illuminated with the Holy Ghost. I spent that evening at Dr. F. G. Williams. While in bed that night I felt what appeared to be a hand upon my left shoulder, and a sensation like fibers of fire immediately enveloped my body. . . . I was enveloped in a heavenly influence and could not sleep for joy. The next morning I started home a happy man.⁴⁷

Dibble's conversion is typical in beginning with Oliver Cowdery's testimony and ending with a personal witness. The man whose name headed the Testimony of Three Witnesses in the Book of Mormon insisted on the reality of seeing angels in his Ohio preaching in 1830, evidenced by Mormon and non-Mormon alike, including several newspaper articles reporting the same thing. If a supernatural experience is easy to allege, it is more difficult to give the personal impression of sincerity. The sources on Cowdery's Ohio preaching in 1830 furnish the means of measuring the man who claimed to have stood in the presence of angels. This Book of Mormon witness was no fanatic, but a man of firm and quiet assurance. Edward Partridge was a mature businessman who was skeptical of the claims of Christian ministers when the four New York mission-

⁴⁶Ibid., 75-6.

⁴⁷Ibid., 76. William F. Cahoon's published baptism date (Oct. 16, 1830) is an obvious error. Cf. Andrew Jensen, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4 (Salt Lake City, 1936), p. 687.

aries called at his hatter's shop in Painesville and presented the Book of Mormon. Lydia Partridge remembered the confrontation:

He told them he did not believe what they said, but believed them to be imposters. Oliver Cowdery said he was thankful there was a God in heaven who knew the hearts of all men. After the men were gone my husband sent a man to follow them and get one of their books.⁴⁸

Similarly, the reception at the Shaker community at North Union was cool, but their iron-willed leader nevertheless considered Cowdery's deportment consistent with his claim. Ashbel Kitchell's journal noted that the missionaries caused "a good deal of excitement" in the Kirtland area, followed by their visit of "two nights and one day" at the Shaker community of North Union:

Late in the fall a member of that society came to our house to visit the Believers. His name was Oliver Cowdery. He stated that he had been one who assisted in the translation of the golden Bible, and had seen the angel, and also had been commissioned by him to go out and bear testimony that God would destroy this generation. By his request we gave liberty for him to bear his testimony in our meeting. But finding he had nothing for us, we treated him kindly and labored to find out their manner of spirit. He appeared meek and mild . . .⁴⁹

This impression of Cowdery is generally found in the records of the Kirtland preaching. John Corrill, shocked at the effrontery of Mormon claims and worried about the conversion of his Campbellite friends, traveled thirty miles to challenge the missionaries personally at Mentor: "I felt indignant and

⁴⁸Extracts from Lydia Partridge's Writings, Family History of Edward Partridge, Jr., p. 5. This episode did not occur at Kirtland, since Lydia Partridge says that the elders next "went to Kirtland to Isaac Morley's . . ." Partridge's residence at Painesville is shown by: his enumeration there on the 1830 census; advertisements in the *Painesville Telegraph* during 1830 for his business accounts and "hat factory" at Painesville; his Aug. 31, 1833 letter from Independence, Mo.: "When I left Painesville two years ago last June, I expected to have returned again to that place the same season . . ." (*Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 1 [Jan., 1835], p. 56.) Cf. Cowdery's comment in the same issue that Partridge "formerly resided" at Painesville (p. 63).

⁴⁹Journal of Ashbel Kitchell, copied by Henry C. Blinn, held by the Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York. A second copy exists, made by Elisha D. Blakeman, but in this Cowdery incident the Blinn copy seems superior. I am very grateful for the assistance of Director Robert F. W. Meader, who agrees with the above judgment. I have spelled Cowdery's name as it apparently read in the original, assuming that the final "y" was not correctly copied by Blinn.

sought an argument with Oliver Cowdery, who refused.”⁵⁰ The appraisals of several converts have already been mentioned. The blunt Lyman Wight sought to avoid hearing the new message, but the missionaries “were not to be put off, but were as good-natured as you please.” John Murdock observed an antagonist bear down “with warmth” upon Cowdery, who “wished not for contention and endeavored to evade controversy.” Levi Hancock reported that the speaker who “had been an eye witness to the things declared” was a “young man whose countenance bespoke a spirit of peace and love.”

Such experiences show clearly why Philo Dibble could travel to Kirtland to find out whether an angel had really appeared, and conclude that the four missionaries “were sincere in their professions.” Their conviction overshadowed a clear lack of polish. Orson Hyde was a young Campbellite preacher of some education and promise. The elders traveled west from the Cleveland area to his station near Elyria, and he could not easily dismiss their declarations:

I encountered them, but perceiving that they were mostly illiterate men, and at the same time observing some examples of superior wisdom and truth in their teaching, I resolved to read the famed “golden Bible,” as it was called.⁵¹

The religious integrity of the first Ohio Mormons is clear. Irresponsible emotionalism does not characterize their beginnings on the Western Reserve. Excesses came later, but these were criticized by Mormon leaders and also by the first converts studied here. On the whole these pioneer Mormons had an impressive background of Bible study. Lydia Partridge probably speaks for the majority of the 1830 converts: “I was induced to believe for the reason that I saw the gospel in its plainness as it was taught in the New Testament, and I also knew that none of the sects of the day taught those things.”⁵² In her own terms, she had joined “the Campbellite Church,” but she was in reality a “Rigdonite,” baptized by him and having faith in some form of modern revelation and spiritual gifts. The missionaries brought not only the Book of Mormon, but full faith in the Book of Acts, with the laying on of hands for the gift of

⁵⁰John Corrill, *Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis, 1839), p. 8.

⁵¹“History of Orson Hyde,” *Deseret News*, May 5, 1858.

⁵²Extracts, History of Edward Partridge, Jr., p. 5.

the Holy Ghost and its accompanying spirituality. Spiritual outpourings which followed duplicated early Christian experiences.

These "gifts" were not automatic, but came from intense inquiry, in which reading the Book of Mormon was stressed. Ashbel Kitchell explained why Oliver Cowdery left seven copies at the Shaker community:

This Mormon appeared to have full faith in their books, that whosoever would read them, would feel so thoroughly convinced of the truth of what they contained, that they would be unable to resist and would finally be obliged to unite with them. He then thought it prudent to wait for us a while for the leaven to work . . .⁵³

In this case the challenge was rather weakly accepted. The seven copies of the Book of Mormon were distributed, but "they were soon returned as not interesting enough to keep one awake while reading."⁵⁴ Conversions through the Book of Mormon were of varied duration. Some knew immediately, some in weeks, and some only after long months of considering. Orson Hyde obtained a Book of Mormon "and read a portion of it, but came to the conclusion that it was all fiction." After preaching against it, he honestly assessed his lack of knowledge of the book, and moved to Kirtland for serious investigation: "after about three months of careful and prayerful investigation . . . I came to the conclusion that the Mormons had more light and a better spirit than their opponents."⁵⁵

Early Ohio conversions that did not last are consistent with those that have been examined. A noted instance of semi-conversion is illuminating. In his first Mormon meeting (at Mayfield) Levi Hancock sat by the young lawyer Card, who was taking notes. Apparently at a later Sunday, after Rigdon's baptism and ordination, Varnum J. Card came to Mayfield accompanied by his friend John Barr. Cowdery and Rigdon spoke at a morning meeting, and Rigdon baptized in mid-afternoon. In the midst of a moving service, "Mr. Card suddenly seized my arm and said, 'Take me away.'" Card's face was "pale," and "his frame trembled as we walked away and mounted our horses." Regaining his composure, Varnum Card evaluated his experience: "'Mr. Barr, if you had not been there, I certainly

⁵³Journal of Kitchell, copied by Blinn.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵"History of Orson Hyde," *Deseret News*, May 5, 1858.

should have gone into the water.' He said the impulse was irresistible."⁵⁶

John Corrill investigated Mormonism while Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jr. were first in Kirtland—and was baptized some six weeks later. Disillusioned at the Mormon persecutions in Missouri, he left the Church and wrote a careful appraisal of his LDS career. His conversion contained both rational and spiritual elements; on renouncing Mormonism, Corrill explained away neither approach. He had "made very diligent inquiry" concerning the origin of the Book of Mormon and was certain that Smith was the author:

As to its being a revelation from God, eleven persons besides Smith bore positive testimony of its truth. After getting acquainted with them, I was unable to impeach their testimony . . .⁵⁷

Corrill attended a Kirtland confirmation meeting in which he sought "to detect their hypocrisy" with "a jealous eye." The ordinances of the sacrament of the Lord's supper and the laying on of hands were followed by a testimony meeting in which prophecy and speaking in tongues were prominent:

I watched closely and examined carefully every movement of the meeting, and after exhausting all my powers to find the deception, I was obliged to acknowledge in my own mind that the meeting had been inspired by some supernatural agency.⁵⁸

During the ensuing winter Ezra Booth and Symonds Ryder were converted, only to be deconverted within a short time. Ryder's attitude on leaving is known, and Booth's long exposé (as earlier discussed) was printed. They both lapsed because of human qualities in a divine organization. Yet neither convincingly dismisses the spirituality of their conversions. Booth wrote:

When I embraced Mormonism, I conscientiously believed it to be of God. The impressions of my mind were deep and powerful, and my feelings were exerted to a degree to which

⁵⁶Statement of John Barr, cit. Frederic G. Mather, *Lippincott's Magazine*, Vol. 36 (1880), pp. 206-7. Card's first name follows the spelling of the Cleveland publications and the *Directory, Cleveland and Ohio City, for the Years 1837-8* (Cleveland, 1837), in which both Card and Barr are listed as practising attorneys.

⁵⁷Corrill, *Brief History*, p. 11.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 9.

I had been a stranger. Like a ghost, it haunted me by night and day, until I was mysteriously hurried, as it were, by a kind of necessity, into the vortex of delusion.⁵⁹

Booth's friend Ryder assessed the apparent integrity of those who founded the new religion, an issue that began for the Ohio converts with Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jr., but immediately included Joseph Smith himself. Almost three decades later Ryder recalled his first impressions:

In the winter of 1831 Joseph Smith with others had an appointment in the south school house in Hiram. Such was the apparent piety, sincerity and humility of the speakers, that many of the hearers were greatly affected and thought it impossible that such preachers should lie in wait to deceive.⁶⁰

The possibility of deception dictated the counter-mission of Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge to the New York neighborhood of Joseph Smith. "M.S.C." wrote contemporaneously that Rigdon left for New York "about three weeks after" his baptism. By then the four New York missionaries had resumed their journey to Missouri, taking the Kirtland convert Frederick G. Williams as an ordained companion, and leaving the Ohio saints under the new elders Sidney Rigdon, John Murdock, and Lyman Wight. In the words of Lydia Partridge, at this time "my husband partly believed, but he had to take a journey to New York State and see the Prophet . . ."⁶¹ Several sources establish the trip as a fact-finding mission. John Corrill perhaps confuses personalities but gives his understanding of the visit's purpose: "after Rigdon had joined the Church in Kirtland, he was afraid that he had been deceived, so he and Edward Partridge went to the state of New York to inquire further into it."⁶² According to Philo Dibble, Partridge also went on behalf of several others. A skeptical neighbor identified Partridge and his business: "We have sent a man down to York State to find out the truth of this work, and he is a man who will not lie."⁶³ John Whitmer's contemporary history indicates the openness of Partridge's inquiries: "he being desirous to know the

⁵⁹Letter of Ezra Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, Sept. 12, 1831, Nelson, Ohio, cit. (Ravenna) *Ohio Star*, Oct. 13, 1831.

⁶⁰Letter of Symonds Ryder to A. S. Hayden, Feb. 1, 1868, Hiram, Ohio, cit. Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples*, p. 220.

⁶¹Extracts, History of Edward Partridge, Jr., p. 5.

⁶²Corrill, *Brief History*, p. 17.

⁶³Dibble, "Narrative," *Early Scenes*, p. 77.

truth of these things, but not having confidence enough to inquire at the hand of God; therefore, he sought testimony of man, and he obtained it . . .”⁶⁴ Lucy Mack Smith recalled the arrival of Rigdon and Partridge while a meeting was in progress at Waterloo, New York. When Joseph Smith finished speaking, he extended an opportunity for spontaneous remarks:

Upon this Mr. Partridge arose and stated that he had been to Manchester, with the view of obtaining further information respecting the doctrine which we preached. But not finding us, he had made some inquiry of our neighbors concerning our characters, which they stated had been unimpeachable until Joseph deceived us relative to the Book of Mormon . . . [H]aving heard that our veracity was not questioned upon any other point than that of our religion, he believed our testimony and was ready to be baptized . . .⁶⁵

Partridge wrote a letter from New York disclosing his belief and baptism to his non-member friends—perhaps with dubious results, for it only caused Philo Dibble’s neighbor to avoid him.⁶⁶ Rigdon and Partridge were back in Ohio by Feb. 1, and Rigdon confirmed their findings:

[He] commenced a long detail of his researches after the character of Joseph Smith. He declared that even his enemies had nothing to say against his character. He had brought a transcript from the docket of two magistrates, where Smith had been tried as a disturber of the peace, which testified that he was honorably acquitted.⁶⁷

The above episode illustrates the continuing effect of the preaching of the Cowdery-Pratt mission in Ohio, for growth was just beginning as they left. The hundred converts on the Western Reserve in November, 1830 were a thousand by the next summer. The missionaries, according to the contemporary “M.S.C.,” had arrived “about the last of October.”⁶⁸ On November 16 the *Painesville Telegraph* indicated that they had come “about two weeks since”—and John Murdock’s autobiography pinpoints a report of the Mentor preaching by Oct. 31.⁶⁹ Lyman Wight remembered the missionaries coming to

⁶⁴The Book of John Whitmer, ms. p. 2.

⁶⁵Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, p. 170.

⁶⁶Dibble, “Narrative,” *Early Scenes*, p. 77.

⁶⁷“M.S.C.,” *Painesville Telegraph*, Feb. 15, 1831.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁹Murdock’s journal gives his baptism as Nov. 5 and reports his hearing of the Mormon elders on the previous Sunday. This was Oct. 31.

him at Kirtland, "about the first of November,"⁷⁰ an episode following the first Mentor preaching. Wight also thought that they stayed "seven weeks," but this is inaccurate. The "two or three weeks" of Pratt's *Autobiography* is a corrective, but "less than four weeks" from Cowdery corresponds better with precise facts.⁷¹ The latest dates at which the New York Elders were in the Kirtland vicinity are November 18 (Wight's confirmation date), and November 20 (Wight's ordination as elder).⁷² The missionaries immediately left, for by November 26 a news story had been written regarding these "deluded mortals" and the arrest of Pratt near Amherst, some 50 miles west of Kirtland.⁷³

In four action-packed weeks, missionaries of the restored gospel had preached intensively in Mentor, Kirtland, and Mayfield, and they had held important meetings in North Union (in Cleveland's Shaker Heights), Warrensville, and Painesville.⁷⁴ They had saturated the Kirtland area with their message and testimony. Their newspaper valedictory reported that "the four persons . . . have proceeded on their mission to the Indians"—and accorded them a grudging tribute:

There are rising of 100 in this and an adjoining county who

⁷⁰Wight's Journal, cit. *History of the Reorganized Church*, p. 153.

⁷¹Cowdery was co-editor and presumably the source of information for this historical summary in the *Evening and the Morning Star*, Vol. 1 (April, 1833), which summarized the Ohio preaching: "These first four, having added one to their number, proceeded to the west, after having baptized one hundred and thirty disciples in less than four weeks and ordained four of them elders . . ."

⁷²Wight's Journal, cit. *History of the Reorganized Church*, p. 154. After a Sunday meeting, apparently held Nov. 14 at Warrensville, John Murdock relates: "On Monday morning the York brethren, accompanied by F. G. Williams, a late convert, took leave of us and started for upper Missouri." But the missionaries appear to be in the midst of their ministry at Kirtland on Nov. 14 and 15, judged by the data of Wight and Rigdon. It is possible that Nov. 15 was simply a farewell to the Warrensville area, but it is more likely that Murdock gives a wrong impression of meetings in his area on Sunday, Nov. 14—that in reality these were on Sunday, Nov. 21, and that he is correct on the day of departure as Monday, Nov. 22.

⁷³On Dec. 14, 1830 the *Painesville Telegraph* copied this story "from the Milan (Huron County [Ohio]) Free Press," in the form of a letter to the editor dated "Amherst, Lorain County, Ohio, Nov. 26, 1830." Cf. n. 75 *infra*.

⁷⁴The missionaries personally contacted Edward Partridge at Painesville (see n. 48, *supra*). Evidence of their public preaching there comes from a source to be used with great care, A. B. Deming's melodramatic newspaper, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*. In Jan., 1888 an affidavit of May 6, 1885 from K.A.E. Bell was printed. Filled with hearsay, the statement contains some personal experience: "I attended the first Mormon meeting Pratt and Cowdery held in Painesville . . . They told about Prophet Jo Smith finding the gold plates, and said they saw them." Bell might have confused Kirtland with Painesville, but Ketchel E. Bell is enumerated in Painesville on the 1830 census.

have embraced the ideas and assertions of Joseph Smith, Jr., many of them respectable for intelligence and piety.⁷⁵

Although the Missouri phase deserves to be fully narrated, the Lamanite Mission achieved its main success among those prepared for the message on the Western Reserve, not among Indian peoples, where political and cultural conditions were not yet ripe. The Ohio labors of Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and their companions doubled the membership of the Church and created a solid nucleus for rapid growth and a secure, if temporary, gathering location. One assesses the impact of four men in four weeks with a certain awe. The fields were ripe, and the hands of the harvesters sure. The documents of the rise of the Church in New York do not furnish personal records that so visibly recreate the events and emotions of the first yield in Ohio. More than any other segment of LDS history, early Kirtland reveals why the restored gospel reached independent minds and induced powerful action. In fact, a study of the conversions on the Western Reserve in 1830 has more than a little relevance for the spread of Mormonism today.

⁷⁵"The Book of Mormon," *Painesville Telegraph*, Nov. 30, 1830.