

Chapter 3

THE BEGINNINGS OF MORMONISM IN GREAT BRITAIN, 1837-1841

In the midst of the turmoil surrounding Joseph Smith and his followers in Kirtland, Joseph received a revelation that would lead to the introduction of the gospel to many thousands of people and would bring into the small church much needed new blood. In June of 1837, a revelation commanded Heber C. Kimball to undertake a mission to England. Six additional missionaries were called to serve in this first mission to Britain. On June 13, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and Joseph Fielding left Kirtland and traveled to New York City where they met three other missionaries from Canada. These three were John Goodson, Isaac Russell, and John Snyder. On July 1, 1837, the small party boarded the *Garrick* and set sail for England. After a pleasant journey of twenty days, the ship anchored in the River Mersey, opposite the city of Liverpool. Kimball and several of his companions were taken ashore in a small boat. When the boat was within about six feet of the shore, Kimball enthusiastically jumped ashore, thus being the first Latter-Day Saint missionary to touch British soil.¹

As they disembarked from the ship, the missionaries became acutely aware of the social and political problems facing this ever-expanding empire. Shortly after their arrival, the missionaries traveled north to the city of Preston, which was the cotton manufacturing center of England.