Section 30

Section 28 resolved the tension Joseph felt between him and Oliver Cowdery and the Whitmers. The second quarterly conference of the young Church of Christ, held in September 1830 at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, culminated when “the Holy Ghost came upon us, and filled us with joy unspeakable: and peace, and faith, and hope, and charity abounded in our midst.” In that setting, Joseph received revelations for Whitmer brothers David, Peter Jr., and John.

David, the Lord said, had misplaced his devotion and his faith. Rather than loving God with all his mind, he became preoccupied with the things of the earth. Here the Lord is probably not accusing David of being worldly. The Lord uses the word world, as in D&C 1:16, when he wants to describe the fallen earth, to suggest evil, or what we might call worldliness. The revelations use the word earth positively. The world is bad; the earth is good. What, then, is the problem? David's priorities. He is a farmer. It is harvest time. He is preoccupied with dirt and crops instead of their “Maker.” David is looking down rather than up. His earthly cares have led him to neglect his commission to harvest souls (D&C 14: 17; 18).

Peter remembered that “the word of the Lord came unto me by the Prophet Joseph Smith . . . saying Peter thou shalt go with Brother Oliver to the Lamanites.”¹ Peter covenanted to obey the command, and he did, traveling nearly 1,000 miles, trudging

¹ Peter Whitmer Jr., Journal, Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT.
much of it through snow. As with so many missionaries, they did not succeed as they
hoped. Baptist missionaries and government agents opposed their efforts, and they
eventually returned east without converting any Native Americans. Taking the Book
of Mormon to that remnant of Israel would have to wait. Meanwhile, the missionaries
had great success with another intended audience of the Book of Mormon. “Strange
as it may appear,” a northern Ohio newspaper reported,

> it is an unquestionable fact, that this singular sect have, within three
> or four weeks, made many proselytes in this county. The number of
> believers in the faith, in three or four of the northern townships, is
> said to exceed one hundred—among whom are many intelligent and
> respectable individuals.²

The Lord calls John Whitmer to proclaim the gospel like a trumpeter. Using the home
of the friendly Philip Burroughs as a headquarters, John is to labor for Zion with his
whole soul, preaching the gospel without fear, for the Lord is with him. Early
missionaries had success preaching the gospel at the Burroughs home in Seneca Falls,
New York.³ John apparently did so for about six months, from this September 1830
calling until his March 1831 calling to keep a history and transcribe for Joseph (see
section 47).

² *Western Courier* (Ravenna, Ohio), May 26, 1831. Levi Jackman wrote that ”something like one hundred
persons joined the Church from that place [Kirtland], with many other branches of the Church organized in
adjoining towns and counties. See Jackman, Autobiography, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee
Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

³ Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, editors, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, Revised and
History Library, Salt Lake City. Lee Yost to Deidrich Willers, May 18, 1897, cited in Larry C. Porter, “A
study of the origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the states of New York and