

## Strangism in Kirtland and England

After his separation from the Shakers, Martin joined with a small nucleus of his old associates in a regeneration of the Church of Christ, which was in the process of conducting regular meetings in the Kirtland Temple. At this juncture, James J. Strang, accompanied by William Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, arrived in Kirtland on Friday, August 7, 1846, to conduct a four-day conference (August 7–10) with his followers in the community and to make an appeal to others who were still in a state of flux as to their religious commitment. The Strangite conference was held in the Kirtland Temple and excited considerable interest as the news spread. Strang reported that the conference was attended by an estimated four hundred persons on Saturday, August 8, and that the lower court of the temple was “well filled” on Sunday, August 9. He declared, “W[illia]m preached twice during the setting and I did four times. Sabbath day I spoke eight hours in my most rapid manner on the order of the Church and in a congregation filling a space fifty-five feet square there was not one inattentive person and I may safely say there were not five persons who were not convinced of the truth of every position I took.”<sup>83</sup>

Among those addressed by James J. Strang, approximately one hundred persons<sup>84</sup> finally subscribed to the “positions” he set forth, including Martin Harris. The next day, Monday, August 10, 1846, was designated as the business session. Strang was sustained “the duly appointed successor of Joseph Smith, as Prophet, Seer, Revelator, and Translator unto the church.” Lester Brooks was ordained an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the stake presidency was to consist of Leonard Rich, Amos Babcock, and Sylvester B. Stoddard. Jacob Bump was named bishop. Prominent among the twelve men sustained to Strang’s Kirtland high council were Martin Harris, his brother Preserved Harris, and William Cowdery, father of Oliver Cowdery.<sup>85</sup>

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83. John J. Hajicek, ed., *Chronicles of Voree 1844–1849* (Burlington, Wisc.: By the editor, 1992), 102 (Kirtland, Ohio, August 14, 1846).

84. Larry C. Porter, “The Odyssey of William Earl McLellin: Man of Diversity, 1806–83,” in *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836*, ed. Jan Shipps and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 340.

85. “Kirtland,” *Voree Herald* 1 (September 1846): 2.

As a significant feature of the conference, Apostles Moses Smith and Lester Brooks and high priests Martin Harris and Hazen Aldrich, with several elders, were appointed to go as missionaries to England.<sup>86</sup> John C. Bennett observed that “some of the Apostles, High Priests, and Elders were appointed at the Kirtland Conference to go to England but on account of reasons not necessary to mention some had declined going.” Bennett also affirmed that Moses Smith was now ready to go (having attended his sick family) if he had the means.<sup>87</sup> The means were apparently not forthcoming, since Moses did not go. Hazen Aldrich, likewise, did not respond to the call. An elder who had an inclination to go but also withdrew was John Jordan, who wrote to Strang, “I had great impression to go to England [however] I could not go knowing that the Church was not able to support my famley [*sic*].”<sup>88</sup> In the final analysis, there were only three who are identified as having actually undertaken the mission to the British Isles: Martin Harris, Lester Brooks, and one of the “several” elders, William Capener. Of the three, William Capener’s activities were more obscure and are little

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86. “Kirtland,” *Voree Herald* 1 (September 1846): 1–2; Hajicek, *Chronicles of Voree*, 99 (Voree, Wisconsin, September 2, 1846). Strang was apparently bolstered in his desire to send missionaries to England by a degree of “confusion” among the Latter-day Saint converts in the British Isles created by the actions of Reuben Hedlock. Hedlock, the presiding leader of the LDS Church in England (1843–45), had been accused of embezzling funds from the Church-sponsored Joint Stock Company in which numbers of Saints had invested funds as stockholders. Brigham Young and the Twelve sent Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor to England to resolve the issues surrounding Hedlock’s reported perfidy. They dissolved the company and distributed the remaining assets to the stockholders. These men had already had experience in combating the inroads of Strangism in America and were prepared to meet its challenges in Britain. See Robin Scott Jensen, “A Witness in England: Martin Harris and the Strangite Mission,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 83–84; Richard L. Jensen, “The British Gathering to Zion,” in *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles 1837–1987*, ed. V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, and Larry C. Porter (Great Britain: University Press, Cambridge, 1987): 170–72.

87. Hajicek, *Chronicles of Voree*, 99, 101 (Voree, September 2, 1846).

88. John Jordan to James Strang, November 30, 1846, James Jesse Strang Collection, #405, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., in Robin Scott Jensen, “Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2005), 107–8 n. 9.

known at this juncture, since he was an 1844 convert to Mormonism.<sup>89</sup> Martin had prophesied as early as 1829 that the Book of Mormon would be preached in England.<sup>90</sup> He was anxious to participate in the fulfillment of his own prediction.

However, Martin's expectation of going to Europe and remaining there for "one year or more," was decidedly complicated by a legal matter of some consequence that involved court action against him by the plaintiff, Hosea White, dating from October 1845.<sup>91</sup> On August 25, 1846, Hosea White received "a judgment before the Supreme Court of the State of Ohio sitting within and for the County of Lake against Joseph Bradley and Martin Harris for the sum of three hundred & fifty dollars debt and two hundred nine dollars & sixty one cents damages and also seventeen dollars & fifty eight

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89. William Capener is mentioned in correspondence from Lester Brooks at Liverpool, England, in which Capener's missionary role is identified: "Martin Harris and William Cap[e]ner, from Ohio are the travelling companions of Brother Brook." "News from England," *Zion's Reveille* (Voree, Wisconsin) 1 (December 1846): 3; see also Frank J. Young, comp., *Strangite Mormons: A Finding Aid* (Vancouver, Wash.: By the author, 1996), 34, 44, 89. William Capener was born on July 30, 1806, in London, England, to Daniel and Elizabeth Capener. He married Sarah Verrinder at the St. George Church in Hanover Square, London, on October 26, 1828. William was a cabinetmaker and architect by trade. Sent to New York on business, he decided to stay and sent for his family in 1833. Eventually locating in Cleveland, Ohio, the Capeners shared a duplex with the Thomas Wilson family. Thomas was the branch president of the Latter-day Saint Church and converted William. He was baptized in March 1844 and ordained an elder in the Kirtland Temple on January 24, 1845. Following his return from the mission to England in 1846, William again affiliated closely with the Latter-day Saints. He was prepared to move to Utah in 1847, but Brigham Young counseled him to stay in Cleveland and make a home for foreign immigrants trafficking through and for the LDS missionaries. The Capeners finally arrived in Salt Lake City with the Thomas Bullock Company on October 2, 1852. William died in Centerville, Utah, on January 24, 1894. See Ella Smith Capener, "William Capener born July 3, 1806, England, Pioneer October 2, 1852 Isaac Bullock Company," submitted March 1954, Camp 21, Salt Lake City, typescript, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Archives, Salt Lake City; Margaret Wicks Taylor Cluff, "History of Wm. Capener Pioneer of 1852," East Mill Creek Camp, typescript, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Archives.

90. Rhett Stephens James, "Martin Harris," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:576.

91. General Index, Lake County Courts, 199; Date of Judgment, October Term 1845, Journal No. B, 480, Lake County Courthouse, West Annex, Painesville, Ohio.

cents costs of suit in a certain action of debt whereof said Joseph Bradley and Martin Harris stand convicted as appears of record.”<sup>92</sup> An appeal to the court of common pleas during their 1846 September term upheld the conviction of Bradley and Harris.<sup>93</sup> Even with the settlement of that decree yet pending, Martin was still determined to pursue his mission to England and appointed agents to administer his affairs as necessity might demand. Before venturing from Ohio for a period of “one year or more,” he designated Jacob Bump,<sup>94</sup> the newly appointed Strangite bishop, and his own brother Preserved Harris to be his “lawful agents.” They were to administer “for the benefit of [his] family and the Church of Christ,” of which Martin penned, “I am a member.”<sup>95</sup> The document granting power of attorney to these men reads in full:

Kirtland Sept the 4th 1846

Know all men by these presents that I Martin Harris am about to leav[e] this continut [Continent] and expect to go to Europe and remain there one year or more I therefore constitute Jacob Bump and Preserved Harris my lawful agents to transact all my business in my name and do further mor[e] giv[e] the said Bump and Harris the full care and controll of my farm and all my personal property in the township of Kirtland and for the benefit of my family and the Church of Christ of which I am a member It is further understood that the said Jacob Bump and Preserved Harris is [to] hold there [*sic*] agency for at least one year and if I do not return within one year their agency to continue until my return And I hereby this day, and by these presents

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92. Lake County Deed Book, vol. H., 104, Lake County Courthouse, Painesville, Ohio.

93. Settlement, Martin Harris and Joseph Bradley to Hosea White following Martin’s return from England in early 1847.

94. Jacob Bump (1791–?), son of Asa Bump and Lydia Dandley, was born in Butternuts, Otsego County, New York. He married Abigail Pettingill. In 1835, he received a blessing for his work on the Kirtland Temple. In 1838, he, along with Warren Parrish and other dissidents, took control of the Kirtland Temple and formed the Church of Christ. He later became the Strangite bishop in Kirtland. Jacob next joined with William E. McLellin and Martin Harris in a reorganization of the Church of Christ in Kirtland.

95. According to Robin Scott Jensen, “It is most likely that Harris was not baptized into the Strangite Church; most of Strang’s followers formerly affiliated with the LDS Church were not.” See Jensen, “Witness in England: Martin Harris and the Strangite Mission,” 82; “Re-Baptisms,” *Voree Herald* 1 (March 1846): 1.

deliver to the said Bump & Harris all the cattle—sheep—grain—  
hogs—farming utensils for the use abov[e] mentioned with the right  
to work or lease my farm as my agents shall think proper—

Signed sealed day and year abov[e] mentioned

In presence of—

Nathaniel Millikin

Martin Harris

Wm H. Fuller<sup>96</sup>

On October 26, 1846, after Martin's departure, a very inclusive lease agreement regarding the use of Martin's property by the lessee, William H. Fuller, was drawn up by his agents, spelling out in detail the terms of the original lease, and signed by his agents Jacob Bump and Preserved Harris and the tenant, William H. Fuller. The contract was witnessed by Dexter Damon and Leonard Ritch (Rich).<sup>97</sup>

Soon after executing the September 4 power of attorney, Martin and his fellow missionaries departed for their port of embarkation at New York harbor for Liverpool, England.<sup>98</sup> Nothing is said of his arrangement for Caroline and family members during his absence. He did pass through Mentor and stopped to converse with his friend Joseph Tuttle. It was

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96. Power of attorney signed by Martin Harris in the presence of Nathaniel Millikin and William H. Fuller, September 4, 1846, in Pleas before the Court of Common Pleas within and for the County of Lake and State of Ohio, March 16, 1847, Final Record No. F, 30–31, in Court Records of Lake County, Lake County Courthouse West Annex, Painesville, Ohio; see also Martin Harris Legal Documents, 1846–65, ms. 240, item A, Kirtland, September 4, 1846, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

97. Martin Harris lease agreement, October 26, 1846, between Martin's agents, Jacob Bump and Preserved Harris, and lessee William H. Fuller, in Pleas before the Court of Common Pleas within and for the County of Lake and State of Ohio, March 16, 1847, Final Record No. F, 31, Court Records of Lake County; see also writ of certiorari filed January 15, 1847, concerning the case of Jacob Bump and William Fuller vs. Martin Harris, Martin Harris Legal Documents 1846–65, ms. 240, item B.

98. The exact date of the departure of Martin and his companions from the port of New York is obscure because of the absence of passenger lists marking their arrival at customs in Liverpool. Paul Smart of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City stated that the "immigration records of passengers from the United States to Great Britain were virtually [all] destroyed in England during World War II." Paul Smart, interviewed by Larry C. Porter, Salt Lake City, September 24, 2009.

Tuttle's recollection that Martin told him of his mission to England saying that it was his intent to "destroy the work [of "Mormonism"]"<sup>99</sup> as far as everything pertaining to it except the connection [Harris] had with the Book of Mormon." According to Tuttle, he tried to persuade him against this line of action, but Martin said his "mind was fully made up that he would deliver a course of lectures against Mormonism."<sup>100</sup> With such fervor in one Strangite missionary, it is little wonder that James Strang claimed the work in England was "progressing" even before the delegation reached English shores.<sup>101</sup> Martin and his traveling companions, Lester Brooks and William Capener, entered the port at Liverpool early in October 1846.

The arrival of the Strangite missionaries was barely preceded by Latter-day Saint Elders Orson Hyde and John Taylor, who came ashore on the morning of October 3, 1846. They were followed by Elder Parley P. Pratt who landed on the evening of October 14, apparently just behind the landing of Martin and his companions.<sup>102</sup> Elders Hyde, Taylor, and Pratt had been sent by Brigham Young and the Twelve to investigate the reported mismanagement of funds associated with an independent Joint Stock Company that had been organized and was being administered by Elders Reuben Hedlock and Thomas Ward for the purported benefit of the Saints.<sup>103</sup> They also played a second role in the rejection of the Strangite missionaries and their doctrine among the English Saints.

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99. Martin was decidedly opposed to certain of the doctrines and practices of "Mormonism" as administered by Brigham Young and the Twelve.

100. "Ye Are My Witnesses," *Autumn Leaves* 1 (April 1888): 182–83, as cited in Robin Scott Jensen, "Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850," 121.

101. "Progress of the Work," *Voree Herald* 1 (September 1846): 3. In refutation to Strang's statement, Orson Hyde and John Taylor printed, "That imposter publishes in his paper, in America, that his cause is very prosperous in England. All the Saints here know that he lies; and if he will lie about things that we do perfectly know and understand, can we trust his word in things that we do not know?" Orson Hyde and John Taylor, "To the Presiding Elders Abroad: Greeting," *Millennial Star* 8 (November 15, 1846): 122.

102. Hyde and Taylor, "To the Presiding Elders Abroad: Greeting," *Millennial Star* 8 (October 15, 1846): 122.

103. Jensen, "Witness in England," 84; Willard Richards, "The Joint Stock Company," *Millennial Star* 8 (November 1, 1846): 102–3.

When Martin and his weary companions disembarked from their seafaring vessel at Liverpool, there was no one to greet them. They were the first representatives of Strang in the British Isles and therefore had no expectant base from which to operate. Martin and his friends complained "very much that they could not get an opportunity to do the work which the Lord sent them to perform."<sup>104</sup> Under these circumstances Martin made a strident effort to gain an audience. Joseph Tuttle reported Martin's approach, explaining that when Harris arrived in England, he "rented a hall; had large circulars posted, announcing that Martin Harris, one of the three special witnesses to the Book of Mormon, would . . . lecture to the people, exposing Mormonism; and all were invited to come and hear." "I remember," said Martin Harris [to Tuttle upon returning from England],

of announcing my subject to the people, and of feeling a pain at my heart when I saw that little handful of Saints sitting before me, and realized that what I had to say would be as death to them; but I know of nothing more, I can tell you of nothing which occurred until [after speaking] I found myself surrounded by those Saints, who, with streaming eyes and broken utterances, were thanking me for the glorious manner in which *I had defended the faith*, and the powerful testimony I had borne to the truth of the work.<sup>105</sup>

Martin's strong testimony of the Book of Mormon resonated with certain of the faithful in England. He was more interested in conveying that conviction than in proselytizing on behalf of Strangism.

Martin and his companion(s) elected to attend the quarterly conference of the Latter-day Saint branch at Birmingham on October 25, 1846.<sup>106</sup> He made himself known to the presiding officer, Elder [John] Banks, and expressed a desire to speak to the congregation.<sup>107</sup> Martin's experience has

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104. "Strangism.—Invitation to Imposters," *Millennial Star* 8, no. 9 (November 20, 1846): 137.

105. "Ye Are My Witnesses," *Autumn Leaves* 1 (April 1888): 183, in Jensen, "Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850," 121; italics added.

106. John Freeman, Diary, October 25, 1846, Church History Library, in Jensen, "Witness in England," 84–85, 95–96.

107. In all probability, the "Brother Banks" referred to was John Banks (1806–62), son of John and Elizabeth Banks, married to Catherine Mayer. In 1847, John Banks was the presiding officer of the Birmingham Branch. In 1850, he migrated to America.

been recounted in a variety of remembrances. Ann Stokes Derry recalled that “a young man of her acquaintance, in the presence of the assembly,” asked Martin if his name was in the Book of Mormon. Martin replied, “It is.” “Did you put your name to that testimony?” the young man asked. Martin answered, “I did; and that the Book of Mormon is the Book of God. I know more about that book than any man living.”<sup>108</sup> His attempt to expound further was countered by Elder Cyrus Wheelock. Wheelock described the setting and then sought to discredit the witness: “In the afternoon our Conference was honored by the August presence of Martin Harris who had Came all the way from America to tell of the wonderful things performed by the wicked Twelve apostles and also that he was a witness of the book of Mormon and brother-in-law to President B. Young.” Angered by his words, Elder Wheelock then spoke of Martin’s character flaws: “I felt it my Duty to give a short history of the Character of said H[arris] which seemed to be anything but Edifying to him.” After Wheelock concluded his scathing remarks, Martin was still “very Desirous of speaking,” but those in attendance “with united voice” concluded that “they did not need his instructions.” Martin withdrew himself from the conference, however not very far. He walked to the street and began to preach, or what Wheelock called “holding forth to the annoyance of the people.” Wheelock then explained that two policemen “very politely waited upon him each affectionately taking an arm [and] led Martin away to the Lockup.”<sup>109</sup>

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108. W[illiam] W. B[lair]., “Mormonism Reviewed,” *Saints’ Herald* 23 (April 1, 1876): 198.

109. Cyrus Wheelock, Journal, June–October 1846 and March–July 1849, October 25, 1846, MS 1790, Church History Library; “Notices,” *Millennial Star* 8 (November 15, 1846): 128. The Burton family tells of their progenitor Joseph Burton and his wife, Eliza, being attracted to Mormonism in the Manchester area. Joseph attended a meeting where Elders Cyrus H. Wheelock and Joseph E. Young preached and purchased a Book of Mormon. He and Eliza began to study the work. Martin Harris had begun following behind Elder Wheelock and his companions, “trying to preach where they had.” Martin “talked of the ‘evil Twelve,’ meaning the apostles that were leading the Church in the wilderness to establish a new Zion.” Eliza listened to these “bad stories” and warned Joseph not to read the Book of Mormon or associate with the Mormon elders. However, while musing on the words of Martin one night after retiring to bed, she prayed for God’s inspiration in the matter. Eliza experienced a brilliant light in the room, brighter than midday. With the disappearance of the light, she lay “amazed at this experience



George Mantle<sup>110</sup> was present and recalled that “an elderly man [Martin Harris] asked permission to speak a few words to us,” but was prevented by Cyrus Wheelock, who spoke of him as being “an apostate from the faith; that he had abused him and his brethren coming across the sea, and he would not allow him to speak.” Mantle continued:

When we came out of the meeting Martin Harris was beset with a crowd in the street, expecting that he would furnish them with material to war against Mormonism; but when he asked if Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, he answered yes; and when asked if the Book of Mormon was true, this was his answer: “Do you know that is the sun shining on us? Because as sure as you know that, I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, and that he translated that book by the power of God.”<sup>111</sup>

The tenor of these recollections reveals much about Martin and the prevailing conditions that would surround his appearance on the English scene. Ann Derry, along with her husband, Charles, later united with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—Charles becoming an Apostle in the Reorganization in 1865. George Mantle later became an elder in the Reorganization. Cyrus Wheelock remained a faithful Latter-day Saint and in 1878 served as president of the Northern States Mission.<sup>112</sup>

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and interpreted it as a sign that the gospel preached by the Mormon Elders was from Christ. She resolved to never say a word against Mormonism again.” Soon afterward, the couple was baptized into the LDS faith. Mark L. Staker to Larry C. Porter, Provo, Utah, September 24, 2009.

110. George Mantle (January 1805–June 1877), was born in Shropshire, England. He married Maria Scriven. He joined the LDS Church in 1846 and emigrated to America in 1847. On August 8, 1865, he was baptized a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Osage County, Missouri, by William Hazzledine. He died near Linn, Osage County, Missouri. See Susan Easton Black, *Early Members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University, 1993), 4:219.

111. “Martin Harris in England,” *Autumn Leaves* 2 (March 2, 1889): 141.

112. For additional information on Ann Stokes Derry and Charles Derry, see Pearl Wilcox, *Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa* (Independence, Mo.: By the author, 1989), 88–90; see also Black, *Early Members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 2:507–9. For additional information on Cyrus Wheelock, see Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical*

Criticism of Martin and other Strangite missionaries increased dramatically after this event. It is obvious that Martin Harris was deeply hurt by his treatment at the hands of Cyrus Wheelock, the extent of which he relayed to his family at a later time. Martin Harris Jr. wrote a letter to George A. Smith on July 13, 1875, and described his father's funeral at Clarkston, Utah. At the end of that recitation, he specifically cited this incident in England, "before hundreds," when Martin was told that "he was cut off from the church and that the curse of God was resting upon him," as a moment when his father's faith and testimony were adversely viewed in the eyes of some to the day of his death. Martin Harris Jr. requested only of President Smith that his obituary "list a few accounts of father's position or standing and give him full credit for what he did do."<sup>113</sup>

Initially, the Strangite delegation was confident that LDS branches would provide needed gathering places for them to preach, much like the Kirtland Temple had been a stage for James Strang in August 1846. To reach congregations of potential converts, the delegation separated from one another to search for "Brighamite" centers of worship. Apostle Lester Brooks was surprised at the number of LDS congregations he found. He wrote to James M. Adams,<sup>114</sup> fellow Apostle in the Strangite organization, that there were "Brighamites" or "Bullies" all over England in "ev[e]ry Conference and over ev[e]ry large branch of the Church," and they were "determined to maintain the ground in that Country at all hazards." Brooks

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*Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History, 1901–36), 4:363.

113. Martin Harris Jr. to George Albert Smith, July 13, 1875, George Albert Smith (1817–75) Papers, MS 1322, item 16, Church History Library; for additional commentary on this letter see chapter 16 herein.

114. James Marvin Adams was baptized into the LDS faith on December 4, 1836, in Andover, Ohio. He served a mission with Hiram Page. James was one of the first men to preach Strangism in Nauvoo. In 1846, he was a member of the Voree high council and ordained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He was in charge of the Strangite emigration to Beaver Island in 1847. After being excommunicated from the Strangite organization, he joined with Charles B. Thompson for a season. Adams moved to Bigler's Grove, Iowa, where he eventually affiliated with the Reorganized Church. When he died on May 11, 1872, he was a member of the quorum of high priests. See Wilcox, *Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa*, 135, 147; Young, *Strangite Mormons: A Finding Aid*, 9.

complained to Adams of extreme measures taken by Brighamite missionaries to hold “that ground.”<sup>115</sup>

Martin and William Capener met together in London. The Martin Harris of 1846 in dress and demeanor did not reflect the financially independent Martin who financed the publication of the Book of Mormon and consecrated substantial funds for the building of Zion in an earlier day. Observing that Martin “looked very unkempt and ragged” as he preached to a crowd on a London street, William Capener “bought him a new suit of clothes that he might look more respectable.”<sup>116</sup> William kept an 1846 diary in which “he speaks of Martin Harris as one of his traveling friends.”<sup>117</sup> Unfortunately, efforts to locate the diary have been unsuccessful. It is anticipated that the diary would conceivably have posted an itinerary of William’s missionary travels and make additional mention of his association with Martin.

From the outset, the Latter-day Saint Apostles and English leadership were united in their strenuous opposition to the presence of the Strangite preachers in their midst. Because Martin Harris was the best-known figure, he became the focal point of their objections by name. Interestingly, the most pointed published accounts aimed at his character did not appear in published form until after Martin had suddenly found it necessary to depart the British Isles for the United States on November 7, 1846, as seen below. Notable among such publications was editor Orson Hyde’s treatise on Martin titled “Sketches of Notorious Characters,” appearing in the *Milennial Star*, November 15, 1846. Orson Hyde had served with Martin on the Kirtland high council in 1834. It was Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and Oliver Cowdery who were instrumental in selecting Elder Hyde to be a member of the original Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835. However, he gave no quarter to his old acquaintance and sounded a direct warning to the LDS membership. Hyde wrote, “One of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, yielded to the spirit and temptation of the Devil a number of

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115. Lester Brooks to James M. Adams, January 12, 1847, James J. Strang Collection, as cited in Jensen, “Witness in England: Martin Harris and the Strangite Mission,” 86.

116. Cluff, “History of Wm. Capener Pioneer of 1852,” 3.

117. Ella Smith Capener, “William Capener,” 16, Isaac Bullock Company, Stagecoach Camp, Box Elder North Company, Garland, Utah, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, in William Capener file, International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum and Archives, Salt Lake City.

years ago—turned against Joseph Smith and became his bitter enemy. He was filled with rage and madness of a demon. One day he would be one thing, and another day another thing. He soon became partially deranged or shattered, as many believe, flying from one thing to another, as if reason and common sense were thrown off their balance.” Elder Hyde then sounded a direct warning: “Let all the Saints beware that they keep in their own bosoms the spirit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Give no place to the Devil, nor to those who have gone out from us, that might be made manifest they are not of us. Receive them not into your houses, neither bid them God speed, lest you be partakers of their evil deeds.”<sup>118</sup> Elder Hyde also penned that Martin was “afraid or ashamed of his profession as a Strangite . . . [and] he tells some of our brethren on whom he called, that he was of the same profession with themselves.”<sup>119</sup>

Five days later, in the November 20, 1846, issue of the *Millennial Star*, Elder John Taylor, also weighed in on the presence of the Strangites, using the press to clearly define the true identity of their taskmaster with a strong denouncement and a similar warning of his own:

We knew that God had not sent them, yet we could not tell whether Mr. Strang or the devil had sent them, or whether they had come themselves; but it was our opinion that His Satanic Majesty, Strang, Brooks, and Harris concocted the mission in company. . . . We have washed our hands and our feet—we have shaken the dust of our garments against them, and borne testimony of the same to our Father in

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118. Orson Hyde, “Sketches of Notorious Characters,” *Millennial Star* 8 (November 15, 1846): 126–27. This was not the first time Orson Hyde had spoken direct words of warning toward Strang and his adherents. On Sunday, March 14, 1846, in Nauvoo, Hyde, who had just been appointed by Brigham Young and fellow Apostles from Winter Quarters to complete and dedicate the Nauvoo Temple, shared with the congregation a revelation he had received from the Lord the previous day warning the Saints concerning Strang and dealing with local apostates, stating, “Behold James J. Strang hath cursed my people by his own spirit and not by mine. Never at any time have I appointed that wicked man to lead my people, neither by my own voice, nor by the voice of my servant Joseph Smith, neither by the voice of mine angel: but he hath sought to deceive and Satan helpeth him.” Myrtle Stevens Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Agreka Books, 2000), 198–200; see also reprint of the revelation in “He That Hath Ears to Hear, Let Him Hear What the Spirit Saith unto the Church,” *Millennial Star* 7 (May 15, 1846): 157–58.

119. Hyde, “Sketches of Notorious Characters,” 128.

heaven. And let this dust cleave to them as a witness of condemnation, and let it cleave to that house that knowingly receives them or harbours them, or that bids them God speed, either directly or indirectly, or that shall knowingly receive, harbor, or entertain any others that may come after them.<sup>120</sup>

However, sensing a need for a hearing, the Latter-day Saint leaders proposed an assembly to which Martin and his companions would be invited for a discussion of the issues. They posted the proposal for the meeting in the *Millennial Star*, explaining, “We thought proper to send [Martin and the Strangite missionaries] an invitation to meet with us, as their operations had been mostly limited to one or two persons who had been excommunicated from our church for some time. We thought that if the Lord had sent them, they might accept our invitation and come, but if the devil had sent them we were confident they would not come to the light.”<sup>121</sup> In case the Strangite delegation had not read their invitation in the *Star*, Elders Hyde and Taylor sent a local member to the home of George Styles, a former Latter-day Saint then housing the Strangite missionaries.<sup>122</sup> Neither Martin nor his companions were at the home to receive the invitation. To ensure that word of the forthcoming meeting had been duly received, the brethren next sent Isaac Brockbank<sup>123</sup> to the Styles home to inquire whether the Strangite missionaries would be in attendance. Brockbank reported that they “declined improving the admirable opportunity which we offered them on this occasion.”<sup>124</sup>

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120. “Strangism—Invitation to Impostors,” *Millennial Star* 8 (November 20, 1846): 138.

121. “Strangism—Invitation to Impostors,” *Millennial Star* 8 (November 20, 1846): 137–38.

122. George Styles and his wife, Margaret, were excommunicated for following the teachings of James J. Strang. See Liverpool England Branch Minutes, Church History Library.

123. Isaac Brockbank (May 17, 1805–April 1, 1878), son of Isaac Brockbank and Agnes Morris, was born in Underbarrow, Westmoreland, England. He married (1) Elizabeth Manwaring, 1835 in Liverpool, Lancashire, England, and (2) Sarah Brown, October 2, 1852, in Salt Lake City. He migrated to America, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley on September 3, 1852, with the Abraham O. Smoot Company. He died in Spanish Fork, Utah County, Utah. See “Isaac Brockbank,” in *Conquerors of the West: Stalwart Mormon Pioneers*, ed. Florence C. Youngberg, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers, 1999), 1:363–64.

124. Isaac Brockbank, “Strangism—Invitation to Impostors,” *Millennial Star* 8 (November 20, 1846): 138; see letters printed in “Discussion,” *Voree Herald* 1,

However, it is probable that the unexpected departure of Martin Harris and Lester Brooks for America at this same time may well have been the deciding factor in their failure to offer any response to the invitation of the brethren.

Initially, Lester Brooks had believed that the work in England was progressing. In a letter to James Strang, reprinted in *Zion's Reveille*,<sup>125</sup> Brooks wrote optimistically of events transpiring in England, calling them "the most cheering intelligence." He acknowledged that the "*Brighamatic clique* had forestalled public opinion, and placed every possible obstacle in the way." Yet, he wrote, "many of the brethren stood ready to receive the truth" and predicted the strength of Strangism would one day be harbored in the Isle of Man. The editor of *Zion's Reveille* further observed, "The brethren in the Isle of Man have written Brother Brooks to visit them. . . . The church may soon expect interesting and highly important information from that quarter." In this correspondence, Brooks announced that he would go to the Isle of Man and take Martin Harris with him. He concluded the letter with, "May prosperity crown [our] efforts."<sup>126</sup>

### Martin: "I Had Defended the Faith"

Success did not crown their efforts. The planned journey to the Isle of Man never materialized. The reason given was that Martin Harris had faltered in his religious commitment to Strangism in Birkenhead, England. At Birkenhead, Martin encountered opposition, not unlike what he had experienced in Birmingham. This time, however, he was reported to have been no match for his opponent, James Marsden of Liverpool.<sup>127</sup> Marsden is reported to have "made Strangism look so contemptibly mean, that Martin publicly

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no. 8 (August 1846): 4; "Copy of a Letter from James J. Strang to Orson Hyde and John Taylor: Answer to the Above," *Millennial Star* 8 (October 15, 1846): 94.

125. Strang made extensive use of a series of newspapers to disseminate information to his scattered flock. The *Voree Herald* began in 1846. It was succeeded by *Zion's Reveille* (1846–47), the *Gospel Herald* (1847–50), and the *Northern Islander* (1850–56).

126. "News from England," *Zion's Reveille* 1 (December 1846): 3.

127. James Marsden (October 26, 1827–May 3, 1886), son of Charles Marsden and Mary Ann Hancock, was born in Old Brampton, Derbyshire, England. He married (1) Ann Eliza Calodine, August 2, 1852, in Salt Lake City, and (2) Ellen Nora Griffith (Thomas), about 1880, Salt Lake City. In 1855, he migrated to America aboard the sailing vessel *Juventa*.

denied being sent by Strang, or being in any way, connected with him. This he did in the presence of many witnesses, and not in some remote region where nobody could ascertain the fact, but here in Birkenhead, where we all know it.”<sup>128</sup> That Martin was moving toward a decisive break with Strangism is not questioned, as succeeding events proved.

Lester Brooks was so threatened by Martin’s faltering conviction that he believed it necessary to persuade him to return to America immediately. Brooks’s plan to leave England sooner than expected apparently had little or nothing to do with the health issues that had plagued him in England. His return, or so he later informed James M. Adams, was essentially due to the uncontrollable actions of Martin Harris. “If Martin ever knew anything about the principles of the gospel he has lost that knowledge,” penned Brooks. “I thought it very necessary that Martin Harris leave that country and there was no other way only for me to come with him.”<sup>129</sup> He later added that he did not “want to go to the heaven that . . . Harris will lead men to.”<sup>130</sup> And in a confession of his stringent feelings to Strang himself, he declared, “The greatest blunder that ever I committed was in taking Harris to England.”<sup>131</sup> Strang was not pleased and continued to castigate Martin long after his separation from the fold. He announced that “the folly of [Martin Harris] defeated their work.”<sup>132</sup>

Martin delayed leaving England with Brooks as long as he could. Although pressured by the Strangite delegation, he insisted upon bearing testimony of what he wished to profess regardless of any inner conflicts with that religious persuasion. He preached Joseph Smith being a prophet of God and of the Book of Mormon being the word of God, all of which was in concert with their beliefs, but he would not witness Strang’s

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128. “Strangism.—Invitation to Impostors,” 137; Journal History of the Church, December 31, 1844, Church History Library; “Strangism.—Invitation to Imposters,” 137.

129. Lester Brooks to James M. Adams, in *Zion’s Reveille* 2 (February 10, 1847): 36; see also Milo M. Quaife, *The Kingdom of Saint James* (New Haven, Conn.: n.p., 1930), 57.

130. “Letter from Brother Brooks to Brother Adams,” *Zion’s Reveille* 2 (February 10, 1847): 36; see also Lester Brooks to James M. Adams, January 12, 1847, in Quaife, *Kingdom of Saint James*, 243–45.

131. Lester Brooks to James J. Strang, March 14, 1847, Strang Collection, #258, in Jensen, “Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850,” 125.

132. “James Strang,” *Gospel Herald* 4 (June 14, 1849): 55.



prophetic claim. Latter-day Saint missionaries were pleased with that testimony, if not the man himself. Martin had thought to remain longer in Britain, but there was no getting away from Lester Brooks. On November 7, 1846, hardly a month after the arrival of the Strangite delegation in England, an alarmed and determined Lester Brooks accompanied a rather disgruntled and reluctant Martin Harris as they boarded the ship *Sea* at Liverpool with passage for New York. Thirty days out from Liverpool, the *Sea* docked at the port of New York on December 8, 1846, and the passengers were processed through customs.<sup>133</sup> William Capener remained behind in England to follow up on the limited inroads the trio had forged during their brief stay. As Brooks explained his early departure to James M. Adams after the fact, “The work is well begun in that Country[.] Brother William Cap[e]ner from Cleveland I left in Charge.”<sup>134</sup>

After an extensive study of the Strangite movement in England, historian Robin Scott Jensen summarized that experience: “With only two known converts, the mission to England exemplifies two of the primary difficulties of Strangite missionary work in general—how the Brighamites worked to thwart the Strangite cause as well as the disillusionment of, and dissension among, its own members and missionaries. In the case of the Strangite English mission, the Strangites were unable to penetrate into the Mormon branches because of the Brighamites’ forceful response against their work combined with the lack of response of a Strangite English missionary, Martin Harris.”<sup>135</sup>

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133. The *Sea* sailed from Liverpool on November 7, 1846, under the ship’s master, Captain Thomas F. Freeman, for the commercial line of John Herdman & Cos., of New York. There were 742 passengers in steerage, where Martin and Lester Brooks were in the 799-ton vessel. The *Sea* was thirty days in transit “from Liverpool, to Taylor & Merritt.” See “Ship News,” *The (London) Times*, November 9, 1846, 7; “Ship News,” *Evening Post* (New York), July 25, 1846, 4; “Arrived,” *New York Daily Tribune*, Marine Journal 6, no. 208 (December 8, 1846): 3; New York Passenger Lists, 1820–97, December 8, 1846, Ship *Sea* of New York, in Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; Fred E. Woods to Larry C. Porter, September 21, 2009, copy of original “List or Manifest of Passengers, District of New York—Port of New York, Ship *Sea*, December 8, 1846,” passenger Lester Brooks is listed as Leicester Brooks, age forty-four, Iron Molder, Ohio, and Martin Harris, age sixty-four, farmer, Ohio.

134. Lester Brooks to James M. Adams, January 12, 1847, Strang Collection, #54, in Jensen, “Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850,” 123.

135. Jensen, “Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850,” 126.



After landing at New York on December 8, Martin Harris and Lester Brooks journeyed together from New York City to Philadelphia. Here they separated, Brooks complaining, "I left him in Philedelpha [*sic*] could get him no 'further.'" <sup>136</sup> Lester then traveled on to his home in Ohio, pausing only long enough to address the Strangites in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As for Martin, before returning to Kirtland, he too preached to the Strangite congregation at Pittsburgh. After listening to Martin's sermon on that occasion, James Smith <sup>137</sup> wrote to Strang extolling the virtue of his words: "We also had Martin Harris, here about two weeks since, and was very glad to see him. We had often heard of him, but until then we never had the pleasure of seeing him. This man, although he has been buffeted and scoffed at by the world made our hearts glad in consequence of the unwavering testimony which he bore with regard to the origin of Mormonism." <sup>138</sup>

Strang tried to reconstitute the presence of his missionaries in England by making appointments to that land during the conference that congregated at Voree, Wisconsin, on April 6, 1847. On motion, it was resolved unanimously "that the following named brethren of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles be appointed to take missions as follows: John E. Page (if his circumstances will admit) William Smith and John Greenhow go on a mission to England." <sup>139</sup> However, the subsequent excommunication of these three individuals from the Strangite church circumvented their ever taking the field in the British Isles. Strang never saw the day when his missionaries would again preach in England. <sup>140</sup>

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136. Lester Brooks to James M. Adams, January 12, 1847, Strang Collection, #54, in Marquardt, "Martin Harris: The Kirtland Years," 25; Jensen, "Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846–1850," 126.

137. James Smith announced that the "Saints in Pittsburg have nearly all returned to the true order of the Church." "James Smith to Presidents [James J.] Strang and [John] Greenhow, January 1847," *Zion's Reveille* 2 (February 11, 1847): 19. In spring 1847, he offered copies of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants to Strangite members for a dollar apiece.

138. James Smith to Presidents [James J.] Strang and [John] Greenhow, January 1847, in *Zion's Reveille* 2 (February 11, 1847): 19.

139. Hajicek, *Chronicles of Voree*, 139 (Burlington, Wisc., April 6, 1847).

140. Jensen, "Witness in England: Martin Harris and the Strangite Mission," 90–91.

By January 2, 1847, Martin had reached Kirtland.<sup>141</sup> There Caroline and family members joyfully greeted their husband and father. He also took occasion to journey north to Mentor, where he reminisced about his experience in England with his longtime friend Joseph Tuttle. There he chose to rehearse that singular moment of gratitude when “surrounded by those Saints, who, with streaming eyes and broken utterances, were thanking me for *the glorious manner in which I had defended the faith, and the powerful testimony I had borne to the truth of the work.*”<sup>142</sup> For years afterward, while in a reflective mood, Martin would express a latent desire to return to England. When Mormon missionary David B. Dille of Ogden, Utah, came through Kirtland on his way to England in the spring of 1855, seventy-two-year-old Martin entreated him: “Just let me go with you to England, I see you can preach. You do the preaching and I will bear testimony to the Book of Mormon and we will convert all England.”<sup>143</sup>

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141. We know that Martin had returned to Kirtland by January 2, because he was in nearby Willoughby Township filing a complaint against Jacob Bump and William Fuller before H. A. Sharp, justice of the peace, on that date. See Martin Harris v. Jacob Bump and William Fuller, March 1847, Final Record No. F, p. 28, Court Records of Lake County; see also The State of Ohio, Lake County, Martin Harris v. Jacob Bump, William Fuller, “Proceedings under the debt registry the action of forcible entry and detaining heard before me H A Sharp, January 2, 1847,” Martin Harris Legal Documents, ms. 240.

142. “Ye Are My Witnesses,” *Autumn Leaves* 1 (April 1888): 183, italics added.

143. David Buel Dille (1812–87), *Reminiscences*, 1886, MS 1107, Church History Library.