

The following article contains extracts “of two long letters” written by a member of the Church of Christ (Mormon) in December 1833 “to his aged father, and [we] are permitted to take such extracts as may interest our readers” and combined into a letter. Quotation marks in the article are omitted.

Source: “EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM A MORMONITE,” *The Unitarian* 1, no. 5 (May 1, 1834):251-53, Boston, Massachusetts.

*Independence, Missouri, December, 1833.*

DEAR FATHER,

The village of Independence stands on the south bank of Missouri river; it contains thirty houses. One half a mile to the west there is a beautiful cultivated spot of one hundred and fifty acres. Notwithstanding the dark cloud which appears to hang over our heads at this time, on this spot of land will shortly be built the temple, and the city of the New Jerusalem, into which our Lord and Saviour will descend in a cloud from heaven with power and great glory. We have a plan given by revelation of the city and the temple. The temple is to be like Solomon's, only far more splendid. Many of our dear brethren, who have been driven from this land by our enemies, will shortly return in the Lord's due time, and help to accomplish this great and glorious work. I have sufficient authority for saying this, for the Lord hath spoken it.

The inhabitants of Jackson county are mostly emigrants from Kentucky and Tennessee. They are generally an indolent and illiterate people. They have been very friendly to us till within six months. They are mostly enemies to the cause of Christ. This county is ruled by about twenty-five rich and designing men from the Southern States, who are mostly engaged in trafficking amongst the Indians. The leaders of this body are about half a dozen of those who receive pay from government and your missionary society. Yea, there was Mr. M., the Baptist missionary to the Indians, who was the leader of a mob of thirty-two who fell upon us in November, and swore in their wrath that they would slay us, if we were not off in twenty-four hours. So the Lord suffers the lofty-minded hypocrite to show out the evil of his heart, that his condemnation may be just. These great men all had a hand in pulling down our printing-office. Great was the waste of property. Thousands of bushels of grain were trodden under feet. Houses were destroyed. Through the mercy of God we all have abundance to subsist on yet. The price of wheat is fifty cents, corn twelve and a half cents, per bushel; beef and pork two and a half to three dollars per hundred.

You wished to know how we spend the Sabbath. We mean to spend it as the Lord has commanded us by revelation. We are strictly forbidden to do any other work on the Lord's day but to prepare our food, and to assemble ourselves together to worship the Lord. We commence our service with prayer. Then it is the duty of every member, both old and young, to arise, one at a time, and speak of the goodness of God, and to confess our sins, if we have committed any the past week, to one another and before the Lord. This is frequently done in an unknown tongue, and then interpreted by one who may have the spirit for this work. Here is the wisdom of the Lord to search out all iniquity; for many of us have been moved by the Spirit and spoke in another tongue that which, when interpreted, would prove to be the secrets of the heart and sinful deeds that we should not confess in our own tongues. Many a one has risen with tears in his eyes, and confessed the truth of the interpretation. Furthermore, in obedience to the commands of the Lord, we on every Sabbath commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord and Saviour, by

partaking of the bread and wine, yea, pure wine, the clear juice of the grape. Our branch made one barrel this fall.

We have had many trying scenes to pass through since we arrived here one year ago. The Lord spake by revelation that he was not well pleased with his children in Zion, and that we all had great need of repentance, pointing out our greatest sins, which were, breaking the law of the celestial kingdom, and not reading the book of Mormon. Again we received the word of the Lord in June by revelation through the prophet in Kirtland, that we had much iniquity amongst us, that he would not have his holy land polluted, and that there was a scourge and a judgment awaiting the inhabitants of Zion. Accordingly our chastisements were very severe. Many were cut off from the church from that time. For several weeks we received great blessings from the Lord. The most of the church that stood received the gift of tongues, to speak in the language of the Lemanites [Lamanites] as well as in those of the isles of the sea and the nations of Ur. It was given to some in each branch of the church to interpret all that was spoken; and also it was given to many of us to prophesy of things shortly to take place. James lived with me last summer; he bids fair to make a holy child; he can speak in as many as twenty-five different tongues.