



Theses and Dissertations

1958-08-01

The Versatile W.W. Phelps: Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer

Walter D. Bowen

Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Bowen, Walter D., "The Versatile W.W. Phelps: Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer" (1958). *Theses and Dissertations*. 4544.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/4544>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

378.2
B67
Copy 2

THE VERSATILE W. W. FIELDS -- NORMAN WRITER, EDUCATOR, AND PIONEER

A Thesis

Submitted to the

Faculty of the Division of Religion

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

Walter Dean Bowen

August, 1958

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the conclusion of this thesis the writer gives special acknowledgement and expresses sincere appreciation to Professor Ivan J. Barrett for his guidance, pertinent suggestions, and personal encouragement.

To Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, an expression of gratitude for his friendly suggestions.

The writer wishes to extend his gratitude to members of the Brigham Young University Library staff, especially to Chad Flake, of the Special Collection Department, for his personal attention and helpful influence.

To the staff members of the Church Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, the writer also wishes to express his sincere appreciation.

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Hermine Briggs Hornum, who in addition to her busy schedule, graciously consented to type and correct the manuscript.

To my wife, a special expression of gratitude for her unselfish devotion and countless hours of work in preparation of the manuscript, in addition to her regular household duties as a mother of four small children.

There are many others who go unmentioned in this acknowledgment who have contributed in countless ways to the accomplishment of this work. To them I extend my sincere appreciation.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure No.	Description	Page No.
1	Picture of William Wines Phelps	5
2	W. W. Phelps Prospectus for the <u>Ontario Phoenix</u> . .	17
3	A Copy of the <u>Ontario Phoenix</u>	21
4	First Issue of the Evening and Morning Star	42
5	A Copy of the <u>Deseret Almanac</u>	156
6	One of W. W. Phelps' Earliest Weather Observations.	167

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS		iv
Chapter		Page
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	FROM BIRTH TO BAPTISM	6
III	MISSOURI AND THE FIRST MOHMON EDITOR PUBLISHER	30
IV	CALLED TO KENTLAND	62
V	SAD EXPERIENCES AT FAR WEST, MISSOURI	76
VI	THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON	95
VII	ACTIVITY DURING THE NAUVOO PERIOD	106
VIII	TO THE WEST WITH THE RAMAGE PRESS	129
IX	PIONEER DAYS IN UTAH	139
X	THE HYMNS AND POETRY OF W. W. FIELDS	177
IX	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	213
APPENDIX		215
BIBLIOGRAPHY		222

Mormonism is the wonder of this world, and the great leveling machine of creeds, constitutions, kingdoms, countries, divisions, notions, notorieties and novelties; and praise it, lie about it, exalt it, degrade it, blow at it, sneer at it, fear it, love it, hate it, persecute it, or laugh at it, still it is Mormonism, true as heaven, powerful as Jesus, eternal as element, going on conquering and to conquer!

Have the mightiest men on earth reared monuments of grandeur? of glory? or duration? of splendor? of fame? of utility? or of admiration? -- Joseph Smith has exceeded all their wisdom and greatness. He has brought back the past and rolled up the future, whereby the past, present, and future, exhibit their images like the skies over the ocean.

-- W. W. Phelps

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

O, thank the Lord for grace and gifts
Renewed in latter days --
For truth and light to guide us right
In wisdom's pleasant ways.

--W. W. Phelps

Various authorities have attributed the greatness of historical characters to the stress and strain of the times in which they lived. They have maintained that a significant element of their greatness is caused by the demands, the challenges and the pressure of the social, economical, and political environment in which they lived.

William Wines Phelps, the subject of this study, spent a lifetime in a creative society, whipped, tossed, and virtually torn asunder by the titanic forces directed at it from year to year.¹ This hectic environment may well be the contributing factor which developed the vitality and versatility that W. W. Phelps manifested throughout his life time.

As a contributor of verse and prose to the Times and Seasons at Nauvoo, William Wines Phelps described in one of his articles each of the twelve apostles:

Brigham Young, the lion of the Lord; John Taylor, the champion of right; Lyman Wight, the wild ram of the mountain; Heber C. Kimball, the herald of grace; Parley P. Pratt, the archer of paradise; Orson Hyde, the olive branch of Israel; Willard Richards, the keeper of the rolls; William Smith, the patriarchal Jacob staff; Wilford Woodruff, the banner of the gospel; George A. Smith, the entablature of truth; Orson Pratt, the gauge of phil-

¹ Webster Tucker, personal unpublished material, Brigham City, Utah.

osophy; John E. Fage, the sun dial.²

If I were to apply such a title to this man, I would name him: "William Wines Phelps, the versatile," and this he truly was. His versatility is evident in his work as a printer, hymn writer, poet-journalist, newspaper editor, judge, orator, scribe, lawyer, educator, missionary, temple worker, member of city council, member of stake presidency, pioneer, explorer, writer of books and pamphlets, topographical engineer, superintendent of schools, surveyor general, weather man, chaplain of lower house of representative, and speaker of the house in the legislature of the State of Deseret.

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following concerning William Wines Phelps:

His merits, experience, and acquirements, but few can compete with in this generation and few I fear will ever appreciate the worth of such men, men upon whom God in his wisdom hath bestowed gifts, that duly qualify them to lead men in the way of life and salvation.³

The writer of this thesis has attempted to write a biography of W. W. Phelps from his birth at Hanover, New Jersey, February 17, 1792, until his death in Salt Lake City, March 7, 1872, in conjunction with his contributions to, and influence on, the issues and problems of Mormon Pioneer history from Kirtland, Ohio, to the Great Basin. For example, his contributions or influence when he joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as an Anti-Masonic editor from New York; his influence as the first Mormon editor in Missouri; his influence in the tremendous

²Times and Seasons, January 1, 1844, Vol. 5, No. 24, p. 759.

³The Improvement Era, Vol. 45, 1942, p. 529.

period at Kirtland in building the first Mormon temple; his influence as an apostate in Missouri, followed by his return to the Church at Nauvoo; his close association with the Prophet Joseph at this time and his continued support of Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles; his influence as a missionary, especially, on his eastern mission, where he secured the Ramage Press, that eventually produced the first copies of the Deseret News in Great Salt Lake Valley; his trek across the plains to the Great Basin, followed by his subsequent contributions politically, socially, and educationally, until his death in 1872; and finally his unparalleled ability as a hymn writer.

Thus, within this period of Mormon Church history, (1831-1872), lived the versatile, William Wines Phelps. As one Latter-day Saint writer appropriately stated:

One of our sweetest hymn writers; a writer of ability, member of the first board of regents of the University of Deseret, who took an active part in developing the schools in early days, and a pioneer, was William W. Phelps.⁴

The data concerning W. W. Phelps, has been acquired from the Brigham Young University library, Latter-day Saint Church Historical library, Latter-day Saint Genealogical Library, the Phelps family material from California, and answers to personal correspondence from historical institutions in New York and Missouri.

Like many previous graduate students in the Division of Religion, the writer is deeply grateful to Brother Ivan J. Barrett for his timely suggestions and encouragement in writing on this subject, and also to Dr. Sperry for his expressed desire to have this biography written.

⁴Levi Edgar Young, "Our Hymns," The Improvement Era (Vol. XVII, Part 2, June, 1914), p. 754.

William Wines Phelps is a key man in the early part of Letter-day Saint history. It is the sincere desire of the writer that this account of the life of W. W. Phelps may be of some contribution, however small, to the field of Church History.

CHAPTER II

FROM BIRTH TO BAPTISM

If you want to learn in youth
What will benefit to age,
Go and study sacred truth
Like a sage.

-- W. W. Phelps

Birth, Early Youth and Manhood

Sixteen years after the outbreak of the American Revolution, William Wines Phelps was born at Dover, New Jersey, February 17, 1792, to Enon and Mehitable Goldsmith Phelps.¹ He was the first-born of a family of twelve children.²

During the year 1800, when William was eight years of age, his father moved the family from Dover, New Jersey, to Honey, New York. It was here in this small New York village, that William Wines Phelps spent the rest of his boyhood days. It was also here that he acquired his common school education.^{3*}

In 1815, at the age of twenty-three, William married Sally Waterman, at Smyrna, Chenango County, New York.⁴

¹ See Appendix A, p. 215.

² Judge Oliver Seymour Phelps and Andrew T. Servin, The Phelps Family of America and Their Ancestors, (Published by Eagle Publishing Co., of Pitt., Mass., 1889, Vol. I,) p. 650.

³ Ibid. *John Henry Evans writes: "He had a good education, which included the Greek and Latin classics, is evident from his numerous writings." John Henry Evans, Joseph Smith, An American Prophet, (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1946), pp. 70-71.

⁴ Andrew Jensen, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia (Vol. III, published by the Andrew Jensen History Co., and printed by the Arrow Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1920), p. 692.

Following his marriage, W. W. Phelps obtained employment as an editor of a newspaper called the Western Courier.⁵ As a consequence of this decision, he entered the field of journalism; a field that was to provide him with unique experiences from the states of New York to the Great Basin.

An Anti-Masonic Editor

Soon after the birth of his first son, William Waterman Phelps, on January 23, 1823, at Homer,⁶ W. W. Phelps moved to Trumansburg, Tompkins County, New York, where he started another publication called the Lake Light.⁷ This was established on October 15, 1827, as an Anti-Masonic paper.⁸ From there he removed to Canandaigua, Ontario County, where he began publishing another paper on April 30, 1828, in the interest of the Anti-Masonic party.⁹ This paper was called the Ontario Phoenix.¹⁰

In the introduction of this thesis the writer made the statement that it is by no means improbable that the pressures of social, economical, and political environment determine, to a great extent at least, the greatness of historical characters.

Thus, before a person can appreciate the position of W. W. Phelps as an Anti-Masonic editor it would be necessary to realize the tremendous

⁵ Phelps and Servin, loc. cit.

⁶ Frank Hession, Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah, 1848-68 (Published by Utah Pioneers, Book Publishing Co., 1915), p. 1104.

⁷ Phelps and Servin, loc. cit.

⁸ See Appendix B, p. 216.

⁹ Phelps and Servin, loc. cit.

¹⁰ Milton W. Hamilton, The Country Printer (New York State, 1785-1830, Columbia University, 1936), p. 290.

political environment that existed throughout the nation and especially in the State of New York during this period.

Concerning the Anti-Masonic movement, Charles McCarthy has written:

It is strange, at least, that such an interesting movement as the Anti-Masonic party -- a movement with which some of the greatest political leaders in the history of our country have been connected -- should have escaped the attention of scholars....¹¹

As an immediate cause of this movement he further states that a certain:

William Morgan was an itinerant character who had eventually settled in Batavia, N. Y. He had been a Freemason, but having become dissatisfied with the order, he resolved to expose its secrets. When this became known, he and his associates were subjected to a series of petty annoyances which culminated finally in his abduction in September, 1826. The remarkable trial of his alleged abductors elicited the greatest interest, not only throughout New York but throughout the Union.

The startling reports which were circulated, together with the attitude of the Masons, soon worked the community into a high pitch of excitement. Rumors that jury and judges were under Masonic influence, and that the legislature too would do nothing of practical use toward bringing the offenders to justice, quickly brought about the belief in that locality that Masonry was incompatible with citizenship or Christian character and must be abolished. The newspaper controversies, the heated arguments, the stubbornness and aggressiveness of the Masons, the church condemnations of Masonry, the incipient riots, the charges and counter-charges, together with the political conditions of the times, led in 1827, to the first steps in the organization of the remarkable political party¹²

In addition to this, however, McCarthy is careful to note that:

. . . True, the Morgan mystery has received its share of attention, and historians have put it down as the main cause

¹¹ Charles McCarthy, "The Anti-Masonic Party" Annual Report of American Historical Association for the Year 1902, ed. Charles H. Haskins, Alfred Thayer Mahan, John Franklin Jameson, etc., (Chapter LVI, Vol. I, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 396.

¹² Ibid., pp. 371-72.

of this peculiar political organization; in fact, it is the practice of even profound historians to call the Anti-Masonic party merely an outgrowth of the mysterious disappearance of William Morgan. Americans are prone to create a political party out of anything, but a moment's reflection should convince us that a party having for its leaders men like Thurlow Weed and Thaddeus Stevens must have had its basis in underlying causes and must have been founded on stronger reasons than those which present themselves at a casual glance. A review of the political situation at the beginning of the period we have been considering reveals to us soil well prepared for political strife.¹³

In describing the situation in New York, McCarthy also states:

In the State of New York, especially, differences had long existed over the Erie Canal question; and war between the supporters of the canal, championed by De Witt Clinton, and their opponents, the Bucktails, whose leader was Van Buren, had been carried on fiercely till 1826 when Clinton joined hands with his enemies and left the canal supporters without a leader and practically unorganized. Such was the political condition of New York when the western part was startled by the disappearance of William Morgan. It will be readily seen that this incident happened at just the right time and place to stir up the excitement which, ably led and skillfully directed, soon developed into a sturdy young political party.¹⁴

In a closer analysis of Anti-Masonry, McCarthy writes:

. . . The first thing that strikes our attention upon closer inspection is that this strange agitation occurred in the remarkable period of the Jacksonian Democracy, an era in America of the Renaissance of the Rights of Man, and of renewed Jeffersonism. It was a period too, of the extension of the franchise, of humanitarian movements such as temperance, abolition of capital punishment, and of imprisonment for debt, of the struggle for workmen's rights, of educational reforms, of Owenism, of Fanny Wrightism, of the beginnings of the Abolition agitation, and of many other equally radical movements. In religion also it was an age of free thought, discussion, struggles over dogma, and with it a strong reactionary spirit which was almost fanatical in its hatred of the new French ideas and of Unitarianism and free thought in general. The religious activity of the time is shown by the agitation over the Sunday mail, the proposed Christian party in politics, the increased zeal for missions, Bible and tract societies, the growth of the Mormons and other peculiar sects, and of the powerful Campbellite agitation in the south. Europe was

¹³ Ibid., p. 369.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 370.

was occupied with the French and Polish revolutions which especially excited American sympathies. It is not surprising that out of this seething mass Antimasonry should have risen. We must, then, in order to find the true basis of the party look beyond the mere Morgan incident and examine into the conditions we have observed and find the reasons outside of those already mentioned which made possible the rise of so great a political movement from so apparently trivial a cause.

The first fundamental consideration is the attitude of the Masons. All evidence points to the fact that at the time of the Morgan affair the Masonic institution "may be said to have been in its palmy state" and had in its ranks the wealthy and influential men of all walks of life. When it was attacked because of the Morgan abduction, its loyal members sprang forward at once to defend it by tongue and pen. Papers were established and able editors secured to defend the order, while other papers under the influence of the order or from political purposes either fought its battles or sought to hush up the outcry. The strength gained by this means was so great that in the early part of 1827 there was actually a reaction in favor of Masonry. The members of the order grew confident, entered politics and boldly upheld their principles.¹⁵

Such determined opposition and such strength displayed served only to prove their opponents' arguments that the organization was using its strength for political purposes, and that they were trying to subvert the Government. This added fuel to the flame and led to a white heat of excitement which finally demolished their lodges and destroyed their organization. If they adhered to their doctrines they were accused of fostering the "spirit of their indomitable opponents," while, on the other hand, when they renounced it, it was looked upon as an additional proof of their misconduct and original evil intentions. Said Harvey, a Mason:

"Lodges by scores and hundreds went down before the torrent and were swept away. In the State of New York alone upward of 400 lodges, or two-thirds of the craft, became extinct. . . . In June, 1838, there were only 46 lodges at work in Pennsylvania."

The majority of the Masons were thought to be naturally opposed to the Jacksonian Democracy, forming as they did a select class in the community; but whether this was so or not, it became evident that the most of them were driven eventually into the Jackson party. The reason for this is twofold: (1) the union of the Antimasons with the National Republicans, especially in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. (2) The attitude of Jackson, who alone of the great leaders supported and praised the Masonic institution openly, and even in the midst of the excitement complimented the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and declared that in his

¹⁵
Ibid., pp. 537-38.

opinion "the Masonic society was an institution calculated to benefit mankind and trusted it would continue to prosper." . . .

The next element to be considered is the religious and moral basis of Antimasonry. We have already noted that the period was one of intense religious activity. On July 4, 1827, in the Seventh Presbyterian Church of the City of Philadelphia, Ezra Stiles Ely preached a sermon in which he said:

"I propose, fellow citizens, a new sort of union, or if you please, a Christian party in politics, which I am exceedingly desirous all good men in our country should join, not by subscribing to a constitution, but by adopting and avowing to act upon religious principles in all civil matters."

Such a statement could not but cause excitement in so democratic a period . . . ¹⁶

The antimasonic party, having so many of the prominent religious men of the country in its ranks and being at this time in a crusade in which "churches were distracted, naturally entered as another element in the religious distress of the period. In New England this was especially true as the party there was composed of the ultra religious country people already in opposition to the liberal spirit of the cities. It can easily be seen from these circumstances that the party soon received the stigma of the "Christian party in politics."

Indeed, if there was a religious party in existence it was the Antimasonic, for it wielded religion as one of its strongest weapons. Not only was every effort directed against Masonic preachers and laymen, but the churches in their councils condemned the order. The charge was made that the --

'Masonic Society professes to find its foundation in the sacred volumes, to have an intimate relation with Solomon's Temple, and to be a religious fraternity -- a household of faith-- a band of mystic brethren. Examining it in the light, we find the religion of the association to be a mixture of Paganism and Mohammedanism, with a corruption of Judaism and Christianity; for many professed Christians, many Baptists, Jews, and even Gentiles are found in its community. We find also that it perverts the meaning (of Christianity) and is full of names of blasphemy and (is guilty of) administering illegal, profane, and horrible oaths.'

The Antimasons in their political meetings passed resolutions similar to the above.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 539-40.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 541-42.

Another fact to be noted about Antimasonry was that it was essentially democratic and partook of the democratic spirit of the age It has been before stated that the Masons as a class occupied the higher positions of society and the State. They were therefore looked upon as members of an antidemocratic institution, the object of which was to "benefit the few at the expense of the many, by creating a privileged class in the midst of a community entitled to enjoy equal rights and privileges."

The names and ceremonies used by the Masons were especially the subject of attack. We read:

Will the people of the Republic suffer slavery and oppression because it has assumed the name of masonry instead of monarchy? Will they suffer grand kings and grand princes and rights and privileges because they hypocritically feign to be republican when by no other name could Americans be enslaved?

And again:

Resolved, That the Antimasonic party is an organization of the people against a secret society -- of republicans against grand kings -- of American citizens against the subjects of the Masonic empire, which extends over Europe and America and is governed by laws paramount to all other law.¹⁸

.....
Another peculiarity of Antimasonry is that it found its chief support in the country and not in the city.* Everywhere throughout the country the Antimasons boasted of their strength in the rural districts and acknowledged the strength of Masonry in the cities.¹⁹

.....
Having considered these conditions we find that the Morgan incident was but the spark that lit the fire. The fire was fanned and controlled by some of the shrewdest leaders this country has ever seen; so it is necessary for us to consider another fact powerful in its effect upon the movement; the influence of great leaders and their methods. Outside of the influence

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 544-45.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 546-47.

* A letter from Albert F. McVean, Town Historian at LeRoy, New York, to the writer substantiates this statement. He states: "You may think it strange, but this convention (at LeRoy, N. Y., in 1828) seemed to be of more importance outside the community than within. We merely furnished the locale. The speakers were Solomon Southwick from Albany and other editors and politicians and members of the clergy. Actually, our local information relative to the meeting is very meagre indeed. It

exerted by the writings of Rush, Adams, and Everett, and the known sympathy of John Marshall, Calhoun, Madison, Webster, Harrison, and many others of lesser light which did so much to convince people of the supposed danger of Masonry; they had in Weed, Seward, A. Tracy, Maynard, Granger, Whittlesey, Spencer, Holley, Ward, Fillmore, Stevens, Burrows, and Fenn, some of the brightest men of the generation; some of the most brilliant newspaper writers and politicians of the time. The greatest of all these is Thurlow Weed, the magician whose wand controlled and directed the operations of the party. The next greatest in the State of New York was perhaps Albert Tracy, the shrewd politician whose leadership was acknowledged by Weed himself and who did so much to unite the jarring elements. The next is Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, who was to that State what Weed was to New York²⁰

The methods used by these leaders for spreading the spirit was unique. The first great factor was the newspapers -- the "free presses," as they were called. It was held by the leaders that the press was muzzled by the Masons, and that it was necessary to spread the doctrines by the establishment of Anti-masonic papers. The New York committee bought the first materials for a newspaper, and they soon sprang up in every direction. In 1832 there were 141 of these papers in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. New York had 45 weeklies and 1 daily, while Pennsylvania had 55 weekly papers. These presses turned out tons of tracts, addresses, almanacs, reports of conventions, histories of the Morgan abduction, and the trial, and letters by Rush and Adams.²¹

In conclusion, McCarthy summarizes by writing two significant statements:

. . . (1) that the Antimasonic party owed much of its strength to the conditions of the times, and was not wholly the product of the abduction of Morgan; (2) that pure Antimasonry has a slight and ephemeral existence politically, and that Antimasonry as it appeared in the election of 1832 was a complex of political and social discontent guided by skilled leaders The party in the political history

*Cont'd. -- It was like the skeleton in the closet. People just didn't talk about it!"

²⁰ Ibid., p. 548.

²¹ Ibid. p. 550.

of America has its chief importance in that it furnished the first solid basis for the Whig movement of the future.²²

William Wines Phelps, from the very outset of this tremendous Anti-Masonic movement, became an active member, a vigorous writer, and a loyal supporter.

However, this new affiliation of Phelps is not surprising, when reconsidering the words of McCarthy. As he stated, this was a period of "The Renaissance of the Rights of Man"; a period of democratic and religious movements; therefore it was not unusual that a versatile and prolific writer, with newspaper experience, such as W. W. Phelps, would join with this new movement.

The Anti-Masonic party was in its initial stages at the latter part of 1827. McCarthy writes that:

Antimasonic nominating conventions were held all over western New York in October and September, and so successful were the candidates nominated that "the results of the election," says Whittlesey, "astonished all -- even the Antimasons themselves -- and opened the eyes of politicians to the growing power of the new party." The Jackson papers admitted that the Antimasons had succeeded in electing 15 members of the assembly

The results of the election encouraged the leaders to look forward hopefully to the year of the general election and the Presidential campaign.²³

Thus when the year of the presidential election opened it was found that the Anti-Masonic party had increased in strength, inasmuch as many Masons had seceded from the order and had avowed their belief that "Masonry was an evil."²⁴ As a result of this, McCarthy states:

²² Ibid. p. 55 .

²³ Ibid., pp. 373-74.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 375.

In February of this year (1828) a convention of seceding Masons met at LeRoy, Genesee County, New York. It denounced Masonry, upheld Morgan's illustrations of Masonry, and sent a memorial to Congress upon the use made of Fort Niagara by the Masons as a prison for Morgan. The publication of the proceedings of the convention in the papers throughout the country served as a most powerful stimulus to the new cause and made many converts....²⁵

Concerning this convention, David Bernard wrote:

. . . . It should be born in mind, that the revelations contained in this volume were read to a convention of seceding Masons, endorsed by them and published by their authority at a convention held at LeRoy, New York,* in February 1828, the first three degrees were read to the convention, whereupon the following resolution was unanimously adopted and signed by all the delegates present, with the degrees taken by each: "Resolved, That the book written by Captain William Morgan, and published by Colonel David C. Miller, entitled 'Illustrations of Masonry,' is a fair and full exhibition of the first three degrees of speculative Free Masonry; that we solemnly and unequivocally testify to the above, we cheerfully subscribe our names thereto."

. . . and then, in order to insure a correct publication, the convention appointed a committee of fifteen to prepare the degrees of Masonry above that of master for publication. The following gentlemen composed said committee: Elder David Bernard, Elder John Stevens, Solomon Southwick, Rev. Reuben Sanborn, David C. Miller, John Hascall, Herbert A. Read, Richard Hollister, Samuel B. Green, Oliver Farward, Edward Giddins, Judge Kirman, William Perry, and W. W. Phelps.

The committee was vouched for as men of good character, and some of them of high standing in society.²⁶

It is significant to note that the publication of the proceedings of the convention in the papers throughout the country, served as a most powerful stimulus to the new cause and made many converts. As a

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ David Bernard, Light on Free Masonry (Revealing the mysteries of odd fellowship: Revised Edition, 8th Edition: Dayton, Ohio -- Published by W. J. Shuey, 1868, Photostatic copy at Brigham Young University; Extracts), vii Preface.

*In connection with this convention, Mr. McVean writes in his letter: "To be sure, there was a very important Anti-Masonic Convention held in LeRoy in 1828, and out of it grew our Convention system of nominating Presidential candidates. Delegates came from all over the state and probably from outside. Three platforms were erected for the speakers. . . ."

consequence, this meeting was followed by an important convention at Le Roy on March 6, 1828.²⁷ McCarthy says:

. . . Twelve counties were represented, viz, Chautauque, Orleans, Ontario, Erie, Monroe, Yates, Niagara, Livingstone, Seneca, Genesee, Wayne, and Tompkins. This convention urged the suppression of Masonry through the ballot box, and recommended the calling of a State convention at Utica in August following; it advocated the establishment of "free presses" and other means of spreading the "blessed spirit."²⁸

Following this convention, William W. Phelps on March 28, 1828, published in the National Observer (Anti-Masonic paper at Albany, New York), a prospectus for his new Anti-Masonic paper named the Ontario Phoenix. It reads: (See illustration on p. 17).

The object of starting another paper in Ontario county, where there are already six respectable ones issued weekly, is to give the people more light in masonry. -- Necessarily, then, its principles will be strictly anti-masonic; -- its aim to expose the evil consequences of secret societies in a free government, and its course independent, -- manly, and free from the cousting of monied aristocracies, or dictation of individuals for personal glory. The time has arrived in the United States for every unshackled citizen to rise in his might and crush an institution, which, in the dark ages, was formed by tyrants for self ends -- and has been continued through blood and terror, for individual or party benefit, till it has become a monstrous machine of evil on the earth -- as contemptible as the Oriental Juggernaut. To prove which we shall recur to the fatal tragedy of William Morgan, who, for publishing the secret to the world was inhumanly kidnapped and murdered by the minions of masonic vengeance, -- and is among the noble martyrs of liberty.

Our discussions shall be candid, prudent, decent, and reasonable, without painning individuals, unless guilty. A pros-
tration of masonry is our design: -- not to scatter fire-brands among men, for honesty is everyday bringing masons from darkness to light; and from what assurances are given us by our friends, we hope to be able to unravel the hitherto hidden end of Morgan, and explain the whole of the great mystery, that has been dark for ages.

²⁷ McCarthy, op. cit., p. 375.

²⁸ Ibid.

NATIONAL

ALBANY, MARCH 28, 1828.



More than 2500 copies of this paper

THE NATIONAL OBSERVER.

Published on FRIDAYS, by G. D. CALPIN, Printer.

To my subscribers—Three Dollars per annum, payable in advance.

To Companies—Of six or more, who receive their papers by mail, \$1.50 in advance.

All Communications, intended for publication, or otherwise, to be addressed to the Editor or Publisher, free of postage.

All Advertisements inserted at the usual prices.

BANK NOTE TABLE.

CORRECTED EVERY FRIDAY, FOR THE NATIONAL OBSERVER.

NEW-YORK.	LOUISIANA.
Albany banks.....par	New-Orleans bank..... 6a8
N. Y. city banks.....par	MISSISSIPPI.
Treasury's bank.....par	Natchez bank.....10
Travellers bank.....par	ALABAMA.
Lansingburgh.....par	Mobile bank.....12
Mohawk.....par	Tombigbee bank.....do
Waverford.....par	MICHIGAN.
Utica banks.....4	Bank of Michigan..... 1/4
Otario.....do	CANADA.
Geneva.....do	Montreal banks..... 3
Canadaigua banks.....do	Quebec bank..... 3
Astoria.....do	York bank.....2a3
Cherry Valley.....do	Kingston bank.....no sales
Rochester.....do	MAINE.
Jefferson county.....1	Wiscasset Hallowell and Au-
Niagara (Buffalo).....1/4	gusta and Castine.....no sales
Chenango.....1a1	Portland banks.....
Saratoga salt co.....par	BANKS OF
Plattsburgh.....75	ALABAMA.
Way.....do	Mobile.....
W. Va. bank.....no sales	Augusta.....
Hubbardsville.....no sales	Bangor.....3
Columbia.....4	Saco.....3
Catalina bank.....do	Casco.....2a3
Greene county.....75	Lincoln.....5
Dartmouth county.....par	Bank.....do
Middlebury.....par	Passamaquoddy.....no sales
Newburgh.....do	Tombigbee.....2a4
Orange Co.....do	MASSACHUSETTS.
Jacob Barker's Ex.....37	Pittsfield.....1 to 1
NEW-JERSEY.	Springfield.....do
State banks.....	Hampshire (N. Hamp.).....do
Atlantic.....	Franklin (N. Hamp.).....do
Hudson.....	Worcester.....do
Jersey bank.....	Worcester (Cape Ann).....1/4
State bank at Trenton.....1/4	Blue Hill.....do
Newark bank and C.....do	Windsor.....do
Sussex.....do	Windsor.....do
New-Brunswick.....do	Sunderland.....do
Commercial bank at Hoboken.....do	Beverly.....do
Trenton banking.....1/4	Banker Hill (Charleston).....do
Salem bank.....3	Boston banks.....do
Farmer's G. M. Holly.....4	Salem banks.....do
Cambridge.....do	Lowell banks.....do
N. J. Mass. bank.....1a1	Newburyport.....do
Weymouth.....do	New Bedford banks.....do
Protection and.....57	Falmouth.....do
Franklin, broke.....1	Fall River (Troy).....do
Monmouth.....2	Paris bank (Nantucket).....do
People's bank.....2	Barnstable.....do
PENNSYLVANIA.	Panochot (Secoconk).....do
Philadelphia banks.....par	Merrimack banks.....do
Bank of Commerce.....3	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Bank of the State.....3	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Bank of the City.....3	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Harrisburgh bank.....1	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Norristown bank.....1	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Easton bank.....2	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Greentown bank.....2	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do
Norristown bank.....2	Phoenix bank (Nantac.).....do

PROPOSALS

ONTARIO PHOENIX.

BY W. W. PHELPS & Co.

THE object of starting another paper in Ontario county, when there are already six respectable ones issued weekly, is to give the people more light in masonry.—Necessarily, then, its principles will be strictly anti-masonic;—its aim to expose the evil consequences of secret societies in a free government, and its course independent,—manly, and free from the coining of monied aristocracies, or dictation of individuals for personal glory. The time has arrived in the United States, for every unshackled citizen to rise in his might and crush an institution, which, in the dark ages, was formed by tyrants for self ends—and has been continued through blood and terror, for individual or party benefit, till it has become a monstrous machine of evil on the earth—as contemptible as the Oriental Juggernaut. To prove which we shall recur to the fatal tragedy of William Morgan, who, for publishing the secret to the world was inhumanly kidnaped and murdered by the minions of masonic vengeance,—and is among the noble martyrs of liberty.

Our discussions shall be candid, prudent, decent, and reasonable, without painting individuals, unless guilty. A prostration of masonry is our design:—not to scatter fire-brands among men, for honesty is every day bringing masons from darkness to light; and from what assurances are given us by our friends, we hope to be able to unravel the hitherto hidden end of Morgan, and explain the whole of the great mystery, that has been dark for ages.

Our political views, at their proper time and season, a mild and moderate view of the sovereignty of the people, that patriotic democracy, which prospered a Washington in the hall, supported a Jefferson in the hall, and has supported a nation for nearly a century shall while we have the Phoenix, rather than the Kingly doctrine, that the world was made for Cesar alone; or that an "enlightened few" are a privileged order, and the rest of mankind must serve them (not probably as slaves) but as creatures to enrich and enable them.

Religion through the merits of a Saviour, shall receive our aid.

Intemperance, that odious sin, that cancer worm of morals, that God destroyer of health, that ruin of domestic felicity, shall be pointed out as it is—a curse and a blot.

Finally, the Phoenix will be a newspaper of importance—embracing anti-masonry, correct notions of morality and intemperance, poetry, amusement, news of state and national governments, foreign news, and every event and literary advance, and to support which we ask the patronage of a generous public.

Terms \$2.00 in mail and office subscribers, and 10 cents for village subscribers.

MEACHAM & DAVIE,

DRAPERS AND TAILORS,

No. 42 1/2 N. Market-street,

RESPECTFULLY inform their friends and the public that they are now receiving the latest WINTER FASHIONS, together with a large assortment of

BROADCLOTHS, CASSIMERES, AND VESTINGS.

with a variety of FANCY ARTICLES, which they will dispose of on very reasonable terms.

Also received, the latest fashions for LADIES' RIDING HABITS, COATS and CLOAKS, likewise CHILDREN'S DRESSING GOWNS, and a variety of fashions

POETRY.

[From the Livingston Review.]
In one of the beautiful lakes of Ontario, according to the tradition of the Indians, which they represent, as the most earth. They further say, that some one once had a view of this Island; but when they approached it, they were involved by labyrinths, and like enchanted land, had just gained it, it seemed to fly before

In deep repose, retired from human
Far to the west a lovely Island lies,
Where Phobus spends the parting
And Cynthia sheds her most enchanted
No mortal feet have reached its bay
Since it came forth from the Creative
But sweet and lone its verdant beach
Beneath the deep cerulean of its sky
The tempest's rage, the lightning's
Upon its bright horizon ne'er have
And only light from some far distance
Expires in angry wave's tumultuous
Perennially pure and blossoming crown
And heaven descended peace forgot
But the bright light of mason's sale was
From man, since ancient times, we
Yet, from the period of its blissful
It boasts admiring eyes and visits
As erst descended in fair Eden's
On earth's errands the celestial
So we venture part beyond the
Upon that isle to lead our way out
And converse hold in the glim of
On fallen man, and the
While from their golden
A hail of reason, down to the
Com all the
From envy, serpent, and
The endless
And the

Livingston, Feb. 22, 1828.

THE NATIONAL
Good
The

THE NATIONAL
The hour must sure
They took ten times an
Past two o'clock

. . . that patriotic democracy which prospered a Washington in the field, supported a Jefferson in the hall, and has happyfied a nation for nearly a half century, shall, while we have "love for county," be cherished in the Phoenix, rather than the kingly doctrine, that "the world was made for Caesar alone," or an "enlightened few" are a privileged order, and the rest of mankind must serve them (not probably as slaves) but as creatures to enrich and enoble them.

Religion through the merits of a Savior, shall receive our aid.

Intemperance, that odious sin, that canker worm of mortality, that fell destroyer of health, that ruiner of domestic felicity, shall be pointed out as it is, a curse to a country.

Finally, the Phoenix will be a newspaper of imperial size -- embracing anti-masonry, correct notions . . . anti-intemperance, poetry, amusement, the doings of state and national governments, foreign news, passing events, and literary advances, and to support which, we ask the patronage of a generous public.²⁹

The Ontario Phoenix was to be published in Canandaigua, Ontario county, New York, as a weekly newspaper.

Thus leaving Trumansburg and his paper, The Lake Light, W. W. Phelps moved to Canandaigua, New York, and on April 30, 1828, established the Ontario Phoenix.³⁰ As editor of this paper, W. W. Phelps played an effective part in the newspaper controversies of this period. For example, on August 4, 1830, Editor Phelps printed an excerpt from the Niagara Courier which stated:

Explanation of E. Giddins for his non-appearance at the recent trials of the Morgan conspirators. He did not appear because, not being an orthodox religionist, his oath had previously been rejected by the court.

²⁹The National Observer, Albany, New York, March 28, 1828. (Photostatic copy sent to writer from Albert F. McVean, Town Historian at LeRoy, New York).

"Our constitutions have fixed a barrier between church and state, but our courts overlay it with impunity, and unite by their decisions things too discordant to have a remote connection; thus annulling the liberty of conscience, sporting with our feelings, and obliging us to become outlaws or hypocrites, unless our religious opinions happen to be in accordance with the popular dogmas of the times."³¹

In addition to this he printed:

Notice: The Anti-Masonic electors of the counties of Seneca, Wayne, Yates, and Ontario, comprising the 26th congressional district, will appoint a number of delegates corresponding to double the number of their representatives in the assembly of this State, to attend a congressional convention to be held at St. John's Franklin House in Geneva, on Wednesday, the 25th day of August next, at 2 o'clock, p.m. to nominate two suitable persons to represent said district in the 22nd session of congress, and for such other business as may be deemed advisable.

Dated Canandaigua, July 14, 1830.

W. W. Phelps,
Secretary of last convention³²

The March 2nd, 1831, issues of Phelps paper (see illustration)* gives an account of the Anti-Masonic convention held in Albany, New York, in which he was again an active and interested delegate from Ontario County, New York.³³

³¹ Ontario Phoenix, Canandaigua, New York, August 4, 1830, Vol. III, No. 14, p. 1, Col. 3 (as given to writer from Dr. James R. Clarke of Brigham Young University Religion Faculty).

³² Ibid., p. 3, Col. 3.

*The writer is indebted to Dr. James R. Clarke of Brigham Young University Religion Faculty for use of his photostatic copies of issues of the Ontario Phoenix, edited by W. W. Phelps. (While in the East in 1945, Dr. Clarke was able to secure photostatic copies of several issues of the Ontario Phoenix.)

³³ Ontario Phoenix, Mar. 2, 1831, Vol. III, No. 44, (Canandaigua, New York.)

ONTARIO PHOENIX.

Vol. III. No. 46.

THE TERMS OF THIS PAPER ARE:
For single numbers, 25 cents; for three months, \$1.50; for six months, \$3.00; for a year, \$6.00. All payments in advance. The paper is published weekly, except on Sundays and public holidays. The price of the paper is 25 cents per copy, in advance.

ANTI-SLAVERY STATE CONVENTION.

The following committee of the Anti-Slavery State Convention, held at Toronto, Ontario, on the 14th and 15th inst., have the honor to inform you that the same has been organized, and is now in session at the residence of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, in the city of Toronto. The convention has elected the following officers: President, Mr. Wm. L. Chapin; Vice-President, Mr. J. W. St. John; Secretary, Mr. J. W. St. John; Treasurer, Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of correspondence, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

The following committee of the Anti-Slavery State Convention, held at Toronto, Ontario, on the 14th and 15th inst., have the honor to inform you that the same has been organized, and is now in session at the residence of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, in the city of Toronto. The convention has elected the following officers: President, Mr. Wm. L. Chapin; Vice-President, Mr. J. W. St. John; Secretary, Mr. J. W. St. John; Treasurer, Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of correspondence, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

NOTICE.

The following committee of the Anti-Slavery State Convention, held at Toronto, Ontario, on the 14th and 15th inst., have the honor to inform you that the same has been organized, and is now in session at the residence of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, in the city of Toronto. The convention has elected the following officers: President, Mr. Wm. L. Chapin; Vice-President, Mr. J. W. St. John; Secretary, Mr. J. W. St. John; Treasurer, Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of correspondence, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

NOTICE.

The following committee of the Anti-Slavery State Convention, held at Toronto, Ontario, on the 14th and 15th inst., have the honor to inform you that the same has been organized, and is now in session at the residence of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, in the city of Toronto. The convention has elected the following officers: President, Mr. Wm. L. Chapin; Vice-President, Mr. J. W. St. John; Secretary, Mr. J. W. St. John; Treasurer, Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of correspondence, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John. The convention has also elected a committee of management, consisting of Mr. Wm. L. Chapin, Mr. J. W. St. John, Mr. J. W. St. John, and Mr. J. W. St. John.

BY order of the Court, the Clerk of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the will of the late John W. L. Chapin, deceased, as the same appears from the records of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, on the 14th day of April, 1834.

BY order of the Court, the Clerk of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the will of the late John W. L. Chapin, deceased, as the same appears from the records of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, on the 14th day of April, 1834.

BY order of the Court, the Clerk of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the will of the late John W. L. Chapin, deceased, as the same appears from the records of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, on the 14th day of April, 1834.

BY order of the Court, the Clerk of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the will of the late John W. L. Chapin, deceased, as the same appears from the records of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, on the 14th day of April, 1834.

DEADLY DISEASE. In consequence of the small pox having been introduced into the County of Ontario, the following is a list of the names of the persons who have died of this disease, as reported to the Clerk of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, on the 14th day of April, 1834.

GEORGE BRINLEY.
Fork, Ontario, 14th April, 1834.

BY order of the Court, the Clerk of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the will of the late John W. L. Chapin, deceased, as the same appears from the records of the Court of Sessions of the County of Ontario, on the 14th day of April, 1834.

Concerning this convention Editor Phelps prints:

Anti-Masonic State Convention

Thursday, February 18, 1831
Friday morning, 10 o'clock

The convention met pursuant to adjournment in the Mayor's court room, when the president announced the following committees: -- . . . for the efficient organization of the Anti-Masonic party -- Messrs. Clark, Reynolds, Phelps, Turner, Gillespie, Pringle, Payne.

Friday afternoon, 4 o'clock

. . . the secretary proceeded to call the roll, when it appeared that 43 counties were represented by 93 delegates as follows: -- . . . Ontario: James H. Woods, W. W. Phelps, Samuel Rawson³⁴

On page two, W. W. Phelps in his editorial prints:

The Anti-Masonic State Convention, (in which we had the honor to act) was undoubtedly the ablest body of Anti-Masons which has ever convened in the State of New York. It was the democracy of the land, the hardy farmers and mechanics assembled in mid-winter, to perpetuate the inestimable blessings of equal rights for the enjoyment of their posterity. It was a body of men acting in unity for public good -- "mild in manner but firm in the thing" -- and well calculated not to insult, or to be insulted. It went for Anti-Masonry -- the whole of Anti-Masonry, and nothing but Anti-Masonry, and hopes for no help but the virtue of the people.³⁵

Thus the newspapers played no little role in the political turmoil between the Masonic and Anti-Masonic party. In connection with the Anti-Masonic editors, Bancroft wrote:

Henceforth, until the Anti-Masonic decline set in, they carried on the most effective system of political propagandism that the State has ever known.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., March 2, 1831, p. 1.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁶ McCarthy, op. cit., pp. 384-85.

Truly W. W. Phelps was a "vigorous and forceful writer and an ardent champion of the causes in which he believed."³⁷

Political Aspiration

It was not an uncommon move at this time to disregard the great political parties in the choice of candidates for office; and to nominate Anti-Masonic candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor.³⁸ Thus it is not surprising that William W. Phelps had been active politically in the State -- so much so, and certainly on account of the partisan paper he published, that his friends tried to get him nominated for lieutenant governor of New York.³⁹ Although W. W. Phelps was never nominated for such a high office, this experience is indicative of his versatile character.⁴⁰

William W. Phelps was a firm believer in the motto "Our God, our Country, and our Rights," that appeared on the first page of his newspaper.*

The Restored Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

On March 26, 1830, the Wayne Sentinel at Palmyra, New York, announced that the Book of Mormon had issued from the press and was ready

³⁷ James R. Clark, M.S., The Story of the Pearl of Great Price (Bookcraft, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah, Second Edition, 1955), p. 22.

³⁸ McCarthy, op. cit., pp. 378-79.

³⁹ Evans, op. cit., p. 71.

⁴⁰ See Appendix C, p. 217.

*It is interesting to compare W. W. Phelps with contemporary editors. For example, McCarthy records: ". . . So strong was the fear of the union of church and state that a paper was founded with the avowed object of preventing it. The paper was called 'The Defender of Our Religious Liberties and Rights,' and in its prospectus it announced its purpose to be 'to expose and resist such measures, in either sect, the design or tendency of which appears to be the union of spiritual and temporal power of sectarian ascendancy or aggrandizement.'" -- McCarthy, op. cit., p. 541.

for sale.⁴¹ A short distance from Palmyra in the town of Canandaigua, Editor Phelps, on April 9, 1830, bought a copy of this book from Farley F. Pratt, a Mormon missionary.⁴² William and Sally Phelps sat up all night to compare the Book of Mormon with the Bible. The following morning W. W. Phelps exclaimed, "I am going to join that church; I am convinced that it is true."⁴³

William W. Phelps later wrote in regard to the Book of Mormon:

I always believed the scriptures, and believed that there was such a sacred thing as pure religion; but I never believed that any of the sects of the day had it, and so I was ever ready to argue, up or down, any church; and that, too, by evidence from the good old book, an intimacy with which I had formed in infancy and cherished in age. When the story related above, first found a resting place in my tabernacle, I rejoiced that there was something coming to point the right way to heaven. So it was, and thank God, so it is.⁴⁴

His love for this sacred volume of literature cannot be doubted, as evident from another occasion, when he wrote:

From the first time I read this volume of volumes, even till now, I have been struck with a kind of sacred joy at its title page. -- What a wonderful volume! What a glorious treasure! By that book I learned the right way to God; by that book I received the fulness of the everlasting gospel; by that book I found the new covenant; by that book I learned when the Lord would gather scattered Israel; by that book I saw that the Lord had set his hand the second time to gather his people; by that book I learned that the new Jerusalem, even Zion was to be built upon this continent; by that book I found a key to the holy

⁴¹ Carter E. Grant, The Kingdom of God Restored (Published and distributed by the Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1955), p. 95.

⁴² The Deseret News, Vol. 10, No. 6, April 11, 1860, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 45.

⁴³ Unpublished material from Alice Phelps (Mrs. J. A. Malin) 1025, Marilyn Dr., Mt. View, California -- In a letter sent to the writer.

⁴⁴ Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 5, Letter No. 4, February, 1835.

prophets; and by that book began to unfold the mysteries of God, and I was made glad. Who can tell his goodness, or estimate the worth of such a book? He only who is directed by the Holy Ghost in all things; and has kept all his Lord's commandments blameless through life.⁴⁵

After receiving and reading the Book of Mormon, W. W. Phelps, "while visiting in the town of Lyons, New York, on April 29, was thrown into prison by a couple of Presbyterian traders,"* supposedly for a small debt. However, he was later informed that "it was for the purpose of keeping me from joining the Mormons."⁴⁶

After reading the Book of Mormon it was the procedure of most early investigators of "Mormonism," to visit the person who was responsible for it and who claimed to be a living Prophet of God; a young man named Joseph Smith. William W. Phelps was no exception to this procedure.

On December 21, 1830, William Wines Phelps met for the first time and "held a conversation" with Joseph Smith. Alluding to this occasion, in a letter, he writes:

Now, notwithstanding my body was not baptized into this church, yet my heart was here from the time I became acquainted with the Book of Mormon; and my hope, steadfast like an anchor, and my faith increased like the grass after a refreshing shower, when I for the first time held a conversation with our beloved brother Joseph who I was willing to acknowledge as a prophet of the Lord, and to whom, and to whose godly account of himself and the work he was engaged in, I owe my first determination to quit the folly of my way,

⁴⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, No. 12, Letter No. 10, p. 168, September, 1835.

⁴⁶ Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 7, April, 1835, p. 97.

* This incident was later alluded to by Sidney Rigdon when giving a conference talk. He said, "I recollect Elder Phelps being put in jail for reading the Book of Mormon. He came to see us, and expressed great astonishment, and left us apparently pondering in his heart; he afterward came to Kirtland, Ohio, and said he was a convert." Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, No. 15, August, 1845, p. 523.

and the fancy and fame of this world, and seek the Lord and his righteousness, in order to enter a better world⁴⁷

A month later, at the outset of the new year, Brother Phelps received a letter from E. D. Howe, who was collecting material for his future book on Mormon history and who had possibly heard of W. W. Phelps as editor of the Ontario Phoenix.

Mr. Howe, undoubtedly was disappointed in the material furnished him when William Phelps wrote to him from Canandaigua, on January 15, 1831:

Dear Sir: Yours of the 11th is before me, but to give you a satisfactory answer, is out of my power. To be sure, I am acquainted with a number of the persons concerned in the publication, called the 'Book of Mormon'-- Joseph Smith is a person of very limited abilities in common learning -- but his knowledge of divine things since the appearance of his book, has astonished many, but of small literary acquirements; he is honest, and sincerely declares upon his soul's salvation that the book is true, and was interpreted by Joseph Smith, through a pair of silver spectacles, found with the plates. The places where they dug for the plates, in Manchester, are to be seen. When the plates were said to have been found, a copy of one or two lines of the characters, were taken by Mr. Harris to Utica, Albany and New York; at New York they were shown to Dr. Mitchell, and he referred to Professor Anthon who translated and declared them to be the ancient short-hand Egyptian. So much is true. The family of Smiths is poor, and generally ignorant in common learning.

I have read the book, and many others have, but we have nothing by which we can positively detect it as an imposition, nor have we anything more than what I have stated and the book itself, to show its genuineness. We doubt -- supposing, if it is false, it will fall and if God, God will sustain it.

I had ten hours discourse with a man from your state, named Higdon, a convert to its doctrines, and he declared it was true, and he knew it by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was again given to man in preparation for the millennium; he appeared to be a man of talents, and sincere in his

profession. Should any new light be shed on the subject, I will apprise you.

W. W. Phelps⁴⁸

The "new light" was shed during the winter and spring months of 1831. This is apparent in his letter to Oliver Cowdery concerning his conversion. He stated:

I was not a professor at the time, nor a believer in sectarian religion, but a believer in God, and the Son of God, as two distinct characters, and a believer in sacred scriptures. I had long been searching for the "old paths," that I might find the right way and walk in it, and after a suitable time to investigate the work, and prove its truth by corresponding evidence from the old Bible, and by internal witness of the spirit, according to the rules of holiness, I embraced it for the truth's sake, and all honest men who seek a better world, will "go and do likewise."⁴⁹

Truly Brother Phelps had found the true church of Jesus Christ which had been organized by a prophet of God! He had found the restored gospel in the Book of Mormon and had received the divine witness of the Holy Ghost that the book was true.

William Wines Phelps and his family were now ready to apply for baptism into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Baptism of William W. Phelps

The May 11, 1831, issue of the Ontario Phoenix contained the valedictory of W. W. Phelps, as he and his family were prepared to start west to Kirtland, Ohio, to join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and offer his time and talents to the "upbuilding of the Kingdom of God on earth."

⁴⁸ E. D. Howe, History of Mormonism (Painesville: printed and published by the author, 1840), pp. 273-74.

⁴⁹ Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 8, May, 1835, pp. 114-15.

Brother Phelps and his family arrived at Kirtland in the middle of June, as the Prophet Joseph and others were preparing for their first journey to Missouri. W. W. Phelps informed the Prophet that he was ready to join the Church and "do the will of the Lord."⁵⁰ The Prophet inquired of the Lord concerning him and received the following:

Behold, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant William, yea, even the Lord of the whole earth, thou art called and chosen; and after thou hast been baptized by water, which if you do with an eye single to my glory, you shall have a remission of your sins and a reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands;

And then thou shalt be ordained by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., to be an elder unto this church, to preach repentance and remission of sins by way of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.

And on whosoever you shall lay your hands, if they are contrite before me, you shall have power to give the Holy Spirit.

And again, you shall be ordained to assist my servant Oliver Cowdery to do the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church, that little children also may receive instruction before me as is pleasing unto me.

And again, verily I say unto you, for this cause you shall take your journey with my servants Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon, that you may be planted in the land of your inheritance to do this work⁵¹

Because of his conversation and experience as a printer, William W. Phelps had been both called and chosen to the ministry; and the special mission of assisting Oliver Cowdery in educational work in Zion. Thus, as commanded, on June 16, 1831, William and Sally Phelps entered

⁵⁰ Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946), Vol. I, p. 185.

⁵¹ Doctrine and Covenants, Section 55.

the waters of baptism.⁵²

Echoes from New York

Concerning the conversion of Sidney Rigdon, another early convert, it has been written:

. . . Rigdon gave Mormonism an intellectual respectability of which it could not boast up to that time. Moreover, he gave it the best and most effective advertising that it ever has received in that section of the United States.⁵³

In a similar manner the news of W. W. Phelps' baptism spread throughout New York. That he was well-known there can be no doubt as can be attested by several articles from early New York newspapers. Concerning his conversion, the Onondaga Register and Syracuse Gazette, on August 10, 1831, wrote:

W. W. Phelps, late editor of the Ontario Phoenix, an Anti-Masonic paper, has embraced the Mormon faith, and has been ordained as an elder, and been commissioned to preach.⁵⁴

Following this statement, the Niagara Courier, on August 30, 1831, wrote:

The Masonic editors seem to be somewhat elated because Mr. W. W. Phelps, late editor of the Ontario Phoenix, "an Anti-Masonic newspaper," as they are sure to designate it, has joined himself to the Mormonites, and been ordained an elder of those fanatics. Is the giving up of a rational being to the dominion of superstition, a legitimate cause for exultation? But Mr. Phelps once before in his life made a mistake. He joined himself to the Masonic imposture! But he had the good sense to quit that well-organized band of ruffians and cut-throats -- and we doubt not, when reason

⁵² Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 7, April, 1835, p. 97.

⁵³ Daryl Chasa, Sidney Rigdon--Early Mormon, A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts, Department of Church History, The University of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois, June, 1931), p. 60.

⁵⁴ Unpublished material from Milton W. Hamilton, Senior Historian, Division of Archives and History, The University of the State of New York.

shall have resumed her place in his mind, he will also abandon the equally false, yet far more innocent, association with which he is now joined.⁵⁵

Thus was the conversion of William W. Phelps heralded in the New York newspapers; a man who possessed rare poetical talent, high literary ability, and scholastic attainments.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

MISSOURI AND THE FIRST MOORMON EDITOR-PUBLISHER

I go devoted to His cause,
And to His will resigned;
His presence will supply the loss
Of all I leave behind.

--W. W. Phelps

Called as Printer to the Church in Zion

Three days following his baptism, W. W. Phelps, the Prophet Joseph, Sidney Rigdon, Martin Harris, Edward Partridge, Joseph Coe, and A. S. Gilbert and his wife, set out from Kirtland on their first visit to Missouri. Journeying by wagon, stage and canal boat to Cincinnati, they took a steamer for Louisville, Kentucky, where following a brief delay, they continued on by boat to St. Louis. From that point Brother Phelps, with the rest of the party, proceeded.¹

. . . across the entire State of Missouri, on foot, to Independence, Jackson county, a distance of nearly three hundred miles as traveled. However, there was a charm about it which lightened toil. The pains and burdens were unworthy of notice in the delightful anticipation of seeing the land for which the Lord, as had been shown to him by vision and prophecy, had reserved so glorious a future.²

They arrived about the middle of July, 1831.³

¹Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah (Vol. I, Salt Lake City, Utah: Cannon and Sons, 1882-1892), p. 87.

²George Q. Cannon, Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet, (Salt Lake City, Utah, Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), p. 115.

³Orson F. Whitney, op. cit., p. 87.

Independence was only twelve miles from the state's western boundary and about three miles south of the Missouri River. As the small party from Kirtland looked down at it for the first time from a "summit near the Blue River" their eyes beheld only a "raw village with a few scattered houses, a log courthouse, and a half-dozen stores. Even so, from a distance the land looked promising. It seemed to them a valley of peace, the promised land for the future."⁴

W. W. Phelps later wrote:

When the first Elders went along with brother Joseph to the western boundaries of Missouri, to seek the land of Zion, for the gathering of the saints in the last days, I was in the little band; when that goodly land was consecrated, we kneeled together; when the first house was raised I helped carry the first log; . . .⁵

On July 17, 1831, the first Sabbath spent in Jackson county, a public meeting was held and William W. Phelps preached the discourse. His congregation was composed of "specimens of all families of the earth."⁶ Following this meeting two were baptized.⁷

About this same time Joseph Smith received further instruction from the Lord. The opening paragraphs of this revelation, known as Section 57 of the Doctrine and Covenants, established Independence in this last dispensation of the gospel as the center place of Zion.⁸

⁴Loy Otis Banks, Missouri Historical Review (Vol. XLIII, No. 1, July 1949), p. 319.

⁵Times and Seasons, October, 1840, Vol. I, No. 12, p. 71.

⁶Joseph F. Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation (Vol. 1, Published by the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), p. 205.

⁷Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 190.

⁸James R. Clarke, The Story of the Pearl of Great Price (Bookcraft, Incorporated, Salt Lake City, Utah, Second Edition, 1955), p. 23.

Subsequently the future temple site was dedicated by the Prophet Joseph.

Describing the "solemnities of the dedication" Brother Phelps writes:

On August 3, 1831, I offered the opening prayer; Joseph Smith delivered the dedicatory words, and Oliver Cowdery closed with a benediction. We planted a stone at the southeast corner of the ten acres for the first Temple.⁹

In this same revelation the Lord says in verse 11, "And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant William W. Phelps be planted in this place, and be established as a printer unto the Church." This shift of "responsibility and position" places W. W. Phelps as the Church printer rather than the assistant to Oliver Cowdery. As a consequence of this situation, James R. Clarke writes:

This shift in responsibility and position between the two men was perhaps prompted by the increased need for the services of Oliver Cowdery in an administrative and directive capacity in his position of Second Elder to the Church and the increased confidence the brethren and the Lord were willing to place in W. W. Phelps after his close association with the Prophet Joseph Smith. W. W. Phelps is now called "as a printer unto the church," and the Lord says: "If the world receive his writings -- behold here is wisdom -- let him obtain whatsoever he can obtain in righteousness, for the good of the saints." (D & C 57:12). We would assume from these instructions and from those previously given in Section 55 that his position can in no way be interpreted to be that simple of a pressman or even a printer as that term is now understood in our highly specialized publishing industry. His normal position, considered without reference to the special responsibilities invoked by these two divine revelations, would be rather that of the printer-editor of a hundred years ago who was characterized at a Printer's Festival in 1846 as being as follows:

"No class of men in any age of the world, have given evidence of so great versatility of talent--universal knowledge and variety of reading, as the body typographical."

⁹Journal History of the Church, A loose-leaf manuscript history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from its organization to the present. Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 3, 1831.

Seemingly, the Lord recognized the ability, the skill, and the experience of this printer-editor.¹⁰

The Vision of W. W. Phelps

Following the dedication of the land of Zion, on the 2nd of August, the Lord in a revelation (Section 60) informed the Prophet Joseph, Brother Phelps, and their companions to return to Kirtland by way of St. Louis. Accordingly, on August 9th, a company of "ten Elders" left Independence in canoes and proceeded down the river. [The journey was uneventful, until the third day, when the dangers of "river navigation" were made known. The brethren had landed at McIlwaine's bend, where they made camp on the bank of the river. While thus encamped, William Phelps had a vision in which he said he saw "the destroyer"* riding upon the face of the waters. Some of the brethren heard a noise, although they did not see anything.¹¹ Following this experience, the Prophet Joseph received the revelation of the destruction that had been decreed upon the rivers.**]

Inasmuch as William and Sidney Gilbert were returning to Kirtland for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements to engage in their respective callings, they were next informed by the Lord through the Prophet, that "it is expedient that my servant Sidney Gilbert and my servant

¹⁰ James R. Clarke, op. cit., p. 24.

¹¹ Ibid.

*The "destroyer" as seen by W. W. Phelps, was in all probability "the Evil one himself," "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary (Revised Edition: Salt Lake City, Utah, Deseret Book Company, 1957), p. 361.

**It is interesting to note a few years later while in Kirtland, Brother Phelps in writing to his wife, who was in Missouri, wrote: "If you will read the 19th verse of a commandment in the little Book of Commandments, page 146, you will see that you cannot go by water, and to go by land would be too hard for you." -- Excerpts from letter in Genealogical Library on Microfilm, Salt Lake City, Utah.

William W. Phelps be in haste upon their errand and mission."¹² Thus from there they traveled to Kirtland where they arrived on September 1, 1831.¹³

The Versatile Phelps and
the Evening and Morning Star

Before leaving Kirtland to return to Missouri, W. W. Phelps attended a conference on September 12th, where he was instructed to stop at Cincinnati,* Ohio, on his return trip, and purchase a press and type for the first newspaper of the Church.¹⁴

This he did, and in June, 1832, published the Evening and Morning Star,** the first periodical of the Latter-day Saints. It was printed by Elder Phelps in a two-story brick building in Independence,¹⁵ and the shop is said to have been "120 miles further west than any other printing office in the United States."¹⁶

¹² Doctrine and Covenants, Section 61:7

¹³ Smith and Sjodahl, op. cit., p. 363.

¹⁴ Andrew Jensen, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia (Vol. III, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1920), p. 692.

¹⁵ See Appendix D, p. 218.

¹⁶ Wendell J. Ashton, Voice in the West, Biography of a Pioneer Newspaper (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, New York, 1950), p. 6.

*On the way back to Kirtland after the dedication of the land of Zion, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery possibly called at Cincinnati and there made tentative gestures toward the purchase of a press and type.--P. Henry Edwards, A Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants (Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, 1948, Re-Organized Church), p. 18.

**It is interesting to note here the observation of Loy Otis Banks. He states: "For the sake of sound as well as sequence, the title should have read 'The Morning and Evening Star.' But Joseph Smith and the small group of Latter-day Saints were less interested in the laws of euphony than in finding an accurate symbol for their publication. 'As the forerunner of the night of the end, and the messenger of the day of redemption,' wrote Phelps in his prospectus in 1832, 'the Star will borrow its light from sacred sources And so was born The Evening and Morning Star." -- The Kansas City Star, Tuesday, Feb. 17, 1940.

When Brother Phelps set up his printing shop, Independence was becoming the springboard to the Western frontier.

Such articles as yarn, ticking, print cloth, and gingham, arriving from North Atlantic States, were loaded there on pack mules. Plodding over the plains in four columns, they carried the goods to Santa Fe. There they were exchanged for Mexican blankets, buffalo skins, gold dust, and rugs. By 1832 Missouri had been a state eleven years, but it was still a frontier, abounding with elk, black bear, antelope, and wild turkey, and even buffalo. Passenger pigeons, whose flights were said literally to darken the skies, were still there, and also the yellow-headed, green-bodied parquets that filled the sycamores.

Not many years before, Missouri's forests had heard the crack of the long rifle of white-haired Daniel Boone, whose son, Daniel Morgan Boone, is said to have been the first white man on the site of Independence.

Some Missouri settlers in the days of Phelps' Star still drove wagons with round slices of logs for wheels and harrowed the soil with brush. It was primitive country, all right.

The Evening and Morning Star was releasing its monthly Church and gospel messages three years before the great journalist, Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) was born to a struggling attorney and his wife from Tennessee, in a "dusty two streeted little Missouri town called Florida."¹⁷

Editor Phelps took pride in the fact that the Star was located "about 120 miles west of any press in the state." A pioneer religious newspaper, the Star was to be the first regularly published newspaper in Jackson County. It followed by twenty-four years the Missouri Gazette, the state's first newspaper.¹⁸

When Patrick Henry said that "the pen is mightier than the sword" he echoed the spirit of this signal entry of the Church into the vast field of journalism. It launched Mormonism into a field that throughout

¹⁷ Ashton, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁸ The Kansas City Star, Tuesday, February 17, 1948.

its history has been of tremendous strength.¹⁹

It should be noted here that before leaving Kirtland in November, 1831, William W. Phelps and others had been appointed custodians of the revelations to be printed in Missouri.^{20*}

After returning to Missouri, he attended a conference in Jackson County. On this occasion Brother Phelps, together with Oliver Cowdery and John Corrill, were appointed to superintend schools in the branches of the Church.²¹

In another meeting on April 30, 1832, W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer were appointed to review the Book of Commandments and "select for printing such as should be deemed by them proper. . . ."²²

The Star was also to publish in addition to the collection of revelations, the hymns which had been selected by Emma Smith. The hymn-book was next in priority, and W. W. Phelps was instructed to review her

¹⁹William J. McNiff, Heaven on Earth, A planned Mormon Society (Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, The Mississippi Valley Press, 1940), pp. 91-92.

²⁰Jensen, op. cit., p. 693.

*In answer to an inquiry, possibly from members of the group meeting at the conference, Joseph received a revelation making him, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, John Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and Oliver Cowdery, managers of these revelations and commandments which had been and were to be given to them. Their rank was that of stewards.

". . . I give unto my servant Joseph Smith Jr., and also unto my servant Martin Harris, and also unto my servant Oliver Cowdery and also unto my servant John Whitmer, and also unto my servant Sidney Rigdon, and also unto my servant W. W. Phelps, by way of commandment unto them.

"For I give unto them a commandment; therefore hearken and hear, for thus saith the Lord unto them--I, the Lord, have appointed them, and ordained them to be stewards over the revelations and commandments which I have given unto them. . . ."--Stanley R. Gunn, Oliver Cowdery, Second Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (A thesis presented to the faculty of the Division of Religion, Brigham Young University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Science, June, 1942), p. 74.

²¹Journal History of the Church, op. cit., January 23, 1832.

²²Ibid., April 30, 1832.

work, then print the collection of hymns.^{23**}

Continuing their plans, at a conference held May 1, 1832, at Independence, Missouri, the brethren decided to limit the first edition of the "Book of Commandments" to three thousand copies, and that William Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer should supervise this publication. It was intended that said book should be a vest-pocket edition of the revelations of God to the Church.²⁴ The original issue of "A Book of Commandments" contained 160 pages and LXV chapters. Each chapter was divided into verses and the book was single-column throughout. The title page, as given on p. 38, is taken from Putnam and McGregor's verbatim copy of the original edition.²⁵

Meanwhile, early in the new year, Brother Phelps set up his staff to help supervise the sixteen page monthly. With the press and type at their disposal, W. W. Phelps issued a prospectus on February 23, 1832, for a monthly paper as the career of Mormon journalism started peacefully.²⁶

As the forerunner of the night of the end, and the messenger of the day of redemption, the Star will borrow its light from sacred sources, and be devoted to the revelations of God as made known to his servants by the Holy Ghost, at sundry times since the creation of man, but more especially in these

²³ Roy A. Chevillie, They Sang of the Restoration, Stories of Latter-day Saint Hymns (A Herald House Publication, Independence, Missouri: 1955), p. 30. ** When the first issue of the first periodical of the Church came out in July, 1832, there were only eight pages in the paper, but almost one of these pages was devoted to hymns, "selected and prepared for the Church of Christ in these last days." -- Ibid., p. 28.

²⁴ Edwards, op. cit., p. 19.

²⁵ John W. Fitzgerald, A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants (Masters thesis in the Division of Religion, Brigham Young University, 1940), p. 8.

²⁶ The Kansas City Star, Tuesday, February 17, 1948.

A BOOK
OF
COMMANDMENTS
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST
ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO LAW, ON THE
6TH OF APRIL, 1830

ZION

PUBLISHED BY W. W. PHELPS & CO.

1833

last days, for the restoration of the house of Israel. We rejoice much because God hath been so mindful of his promise, as again to send into this world the Holy Ghost, whereby we are enabled to know the right way to holiness; and, furthermore, to prove all doctrines, whether they be of God or of man; for there can be but one, as Christ and the Father are one

Wherefore, we beseech all that have ears to hear, or eyes to see, to beware! for God, at all times, when he was about to visit the children of men for their wickedness, hath sent angels, or prophets, to warn them of what was about to take place. As before the flood he sent Enoch and Noah; before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, two angels; before he took Israel out of Egypt, Moses and Aaron, and so down to the coming of our Savior: and can less be expected before the great day of our Lord? Will God neglect to blow the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in his holy mountain; or refuse to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh that will serve him in truth, before the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget him? No; heaven and earth shall pass away but not a jot or tittle of his word shall ever fail. Therefore, in the fear of him, and to spread the truth among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, this paper is sent forth, that a wicked world may know that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer who shall come to Zion, will soon appear unto them that look for him, the second time without sin unto salvation, to make a full end of all nations whither he hath driven Israel, but will not make a full end of him, because he cometh to make restitution of all things which he hath spoken by the mouths of all his holy prophets since the world began.

The Book of Mormon, having already gone to the world, being the fulness of the gospel to the Gentiles, according to the promises of old, we know that the blessing of Joseph is near at hand. . . .

We know there are many lying spirits abroad in the earth, to withstand the truth and deceive the people, but he cannot be called a disciple of the humble Jesus, who doth not know the language of God from the language of man. The Savior declares: He that will not believe me will not believe the Father which sent me. . . .²⁷

It is significant that the publication was sent forth as a "Harbinger of peace," as well as a messenger of truth to all. It was also "an ensign to the nations," and Editor Phelps declared that it came,

²⁷ Clarke, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-27 .

in meekness and mercy to all mankind, that they may do works meet for repentance and be saved in the first resurrection, and afterwards dwell with the spirits of just men made perfect in the celestial kingdom It was to show that, the ensign is now set up unto which all nations shall come, and worship the Lord, the God of Jacob, acceptably.²⁶

One writer has made the following observations concerning the first issue of the Star:

For a church that had been founded on revelation, it was not strange that the entire front page of the Star should be taken up by the "Articles and Covenants." * In publishing this statement of faith, the Star gave its readers a preview of its coming pre-occupation with fundamental church organization and doctrine, indicating that already it had virtually become the official organ of the church.

Although this first issue of the Star was essentially grave in tone, as were the twenty-three numbers which followed, Editor Phelps must have known his readers would take an unfeigned delight in learning that "Robert Dale Owen, the free thinker, who was in favor of free intercourse independent of matrimony, has lately been married." The sense of divine destiny was strong in the Star's columns and extended even to "Worldly Matters," where the editor's comments frequently bridge the gap from physical to spiritual aspects of the news.^{26a}

Continuing in his prospectus, Brother Phelps had stated that the Star,

'Will contain whatever of truth or information that can benefit the Saints without interfering politics, broils, or the gainsaying of the world.'

That he was incensed by reports then circulating was apparent in his April editorial. 'Of all the statements that have been published in the newspapers of the day concerning this church,' he wrote, 'not one has reached us but what in a greater or less degree was untrue.'²⁹

²⁶ Joseph F. Smith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 332.

^{26a} The Kansas City Star, February 17, 1948.

²⁹ Ibid.

*In those first 14 numbers many of the revelations given to Joseph Smith were published. In the first nine numbers sixteen entire revelations that are now in the Doctrine and Covenants were published and parts of

Comparatively few of the Star's columns were filled with news from other papers. Under "Foreign News," however, were news bits from Portugal, Ireland, and France. 'We select an item or two of foreign news to give the reader an idea of the world and its agitations at the present day,' explained Editor Phelps. Knowing the unreliability of much of the news of foreign countries, he wisely remarked that 'in giving the news of the world, we take it as we find it, and will not be responsible for its truth.' Under "Worldly Matters" appeared brief gleanings from the New York Journal of Commerce, New York Courier, and Enquirer, and the Christian Watchman.³⁰

The Prophet Joseph received the first number of the Evening and Morning Star. (See illustration on page 42.) This was a glorious treat to the Saints.

Delightful indeed, was it to contemplate that the little band of brethren had become so large, and grown so strong, in so short a time as to be able to issue a paper of their own, which contained not only some of the revelations, but other information also, which would gratify and enlighten the humble inquirer after truth.^{31*}

With the tremendous responsibility that Brother Phelps had as editor of the Evening and Morning Star, one will agree with Loy Otis Banks** who writes:

nine others. Ten of these revelations deal directly with the subject of the establishment of the Land and the City of Zion.--Clark, op. cit., p. 28.

³⁰ Banks, op. cit., p. 321.

³¹ Joseph F. Smith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 331. *The second number of the Star also arrived in due time and in the history of the Prophet received considerable attention. It arrived in Kirtland in August. From it the Prophet copied extensively. There was an article to "The Elders in the Land of Zion, to the Church of Christ Scattered Abroad." This article contained items of interest in relation to the affairs of the Church in Zion. It is very interesting and can be fully considered in the "Documentary History," Vol. 1, pp. 277-279. Another article is, "To the Elders of the Church of Christ, Who Preach Good Tidings to the World." This also is interesting, containing counsel and information, concerning the preaching of the Gospel and bearing witness to the world. There was an article on "Foreign News," and one on "Items for the Public," and a very unique article, "To the Honorable Men of the World," op. cit., pp. 333-334.

**Professor of Journalism and English at Kansas State Teachers College.

Revelations.

THE ARTICLES AND COVENANTS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

THE rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in the flesh; it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God in the fourth month and on the sixth day of the month, which is called April. Which commandments were given to Joseph, who was called of God and ordained an Apostle of Jesus Christ, an Elder of this Church; and also to Oliver, who was called of God an Apostle of Jesus Christ, an Elder of this Church, and ordained under his hand; and this according to the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to whom be all glory both now and forever. Amen.

For, after that it truly was manifested unto this first Elder, that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world, but after truly repenting God ministered unto him by an holy angel, whose countenance was as lightning, and whose garments were pure and white above all whiteness, and gave unto him commandments which inspired him from on high, and gave unto him power, by the means which were prepared, that he should translate a Book, which Book contained a record of a fallen people, and also the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; and also to the Jews, proving unto them, that the holy Scriptures are true; and also, that God doth inspire men and call them to his holy work, in these last days as well as in days of old, that he might be the same God forever. Amen.

Which Book was given by inspiration, and is called The Book of Mormon, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and declared unto the world by them: Wherefore, having so great witnesses, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter receive this work, either to faith and righteousness, or to the hardness of heart in unbelief, to their own condemnation, for the Lord God hath spoken it, for we, the Elders of the Church, have heard and bear witness to the words of the glorious Majesty on high; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Wherefore, by these things we know, that there is a God in Heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, the same unchangeable God, the maker of Heaven and earth and all things that in them is, and that he created man male and female, and after his own image, and in his own likeness created he them; and that he gave unto the children of men commandments, that they should love and serve him the only being whom they should worship, but by the transgression of these holy laws, man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man: Wherefore the Almighty God gave his only begotten Son, as it is written in those Scriptures, which have been given of him, that he suffered temptations, but gave no heed unto them; that he was crucified, died, and rose again the third day, and that he ascended into Heaven to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with Almighty power, according to the will of the Father. Therefore, as many as would believe and were baptized in his holy name, and endured in faith to the end, should be saved; yea, even as many as were before he came in the flesh, from the beginning, who believed in the words of the holy Prophets, who were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, which truly testifies of him in all things, as well as those who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God, by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and of the Son, which Father and Son and Holy Ghost, is one God, infinite and eternal, without end. Amen.

And we know, that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the Kingdom of God: And we know, that Justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is just and true; and we know, also, that Sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength, but there is a possibility that men may fall from grace and depart from the living God. Therefore let the Church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; yea, and even he that is sanctified also: and we know, that these things are true and agreeable to the Revelation of John, neither adding to, nor diminishing from the prophecy of his Book; neither to the holy Scriptures; neither to the Revelations of God which shall come hereafter, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost; neither by the voice of God; neither by the ministering of angels, and the Lord God hath spoken it; and honor, power, and glory be rendered to his holy name both now and ever. Amen.

And again, by way of commandment to the Church, concerning the manner of baptism: Behold whosoever humbleth himself before God and desireth to be baptized, and comes forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnesseth unto the Church, that they have truly repented of all their sins and are willing to take upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him unto the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received the spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins; then shall they be received unto baptism into the Church of Christ.

The duty of the Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons and members of the Church of Christ. An Apostle is an Elder, and it is his calling to baptize and to ordain other Elders, Priests, Teachers and Deacons, and to administer the flesh and blood of Christ according to the Scriptures, and to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the Church, and to confirm the Church by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, and to take the lead of all meetings. The Elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost. The Priests' duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort and baptize, and administer the Sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and also to attend to all family duties; and ordain other Priests, Teachers and Deacons, and take the lead in meetings; but none of these offices is he to do when there is an Elder present, but in all cases is to assist the Elder. The Teachers' duty is to watch over the Church always, and be with them, and strengthen them, and see that there is no iniquity in the Church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying nor back-biting nor evil speaking; and see that the Church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty; and he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the Elder or Priest, and is to be assisted always, and in all his duties in the Church by the Deacons; but neither the Teacher nor Deacons, have authority to baptize nor administer the Sacrament, but are to warn, expound, exhort and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ.

Every Elder, Priest, Teacher, or Deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him, by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.

The several Elders composing this Church of Christ, are to meet in Conference once in three months, to do Church business whatsoever is necessary. And each Priest or Teacher, who is ordained by a Priest, is to take a certificate from him at the time, which when presented to an Elder, he is to give him a License, which shall authorize him to perform the duty of his calling.

The duty of the members after they are received by baptism. The Elders or Priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning this Church of Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the Sacrament, and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the Elders; so that all things may be done in order. And the members shall manifest before the Church, and also before the Elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy of it, that there may be works and faith agreeable to the holy Scriptures, walking in holiness before the Lord. Every member of this Church of Christ having children, is to bring them unto the Elders before the Church, who are to lay their hands on them in the name of the Lord, and bless them in the name of Christ. There cannot any one be received into this Church of Christ, who has not arrived to the years of accountability before God, and is not capable of repentance.

And baptism is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent: Whosoever being called of God and having authority given them of Jesus Christ, shall go down into the water with them, and shall say, calling them by name: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Then shall he immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And it is expedient that the Church meet together oft to partake of Bread and Wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; and the Elder or Priest shall administer it, and after this manner shall he do, he shall kneel with the Church, and call upon the Father in mighty prayer saying: O God the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his spirit to be with them. Amen. The manner of administering the Wine: Behold they shall take the Cup and say, O God the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this Wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them, that they may witness unto thee, O God the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his spirit to be with them. Amen.

Any member of this Church of Christ, transgressing or being overtaken in a fault shall be dealt with according as the Scriptures direct. It shall be the duty of the several churches, composing this Church of Christ, to send one or more of their Teachers to attend the several Conferences, held by the Elders of this Church, with a list of the names of the several members, uniting themselves to the Church since the last Conference, or send by the hand of some Priest; so that there can be kept a regular list of all the names of the members of the whole Church, in a Book kept by one of the Elders; whomsoever the other Elders shall appoint from time to time; and also, if any have been expelled from the Church, so that their names may be blotted out of the general Church Record of names. Any member removing from the Church where he resides, if going to a Church where he is not known, may take a letter certifying that he is a regular member and in good standing; which certificate may be signed by any Elder or Priest, if the member receiving the letter is personally acquainted with the Elder or Priest, or it may be signed by the Teachers or Deacons of the Church.

Behold, I say unto you, that all old Covenants have I caused to be done away if

The Evening and Morning Star had proved itself indispensable in the pioneer phase of the religious organization. It had been an arm reaching out to unify and consolidate. In days when travel was slow and difficult, when missionaries frequently traveled on foot and printed material was by no means abundant, the influence of the Star, which could be passed from house to house, was extraordinary. The Star's effectiveness in spreading the Church doctrines and principles could be measured by the enthusiastic letters of readers from virtually every state of the nation, and certainly by hundreds of converts. In the early months of its publication, under continuous aniping from an unfriendly press, and later under threats of violence, the little religious monthly had championed the cause of Latter-day Saintism with a fervor unequalled on the western frontier.³²

Dark Clouds of Trouble

Soon after the early issues of the Evening and Morning Star had come off the press, the Prophet wrote to Elder William W. Phelps at Independence, and "expressed to him in words of tender fellowship, his love and confidence."³³ He wrote:

Brother William, in the love of God, having the most implicit confidence in you as a man of God, having obtained this confidence by a vision of heaven³⁴

However, at the conclusion of the letter, the Prophet gently warns:

Now, Brother William, if what I have said is true, how careful men ought to be what they do in the last days, lest they are cut short of their expectations, and they that think they stand shall fall, because they keep not the Lord's commandments; whilst you, who do the will of the Lord and keep His commandments have need to rejoice with unspeakable joy³⁵

³²Banks, op. cit., p. 333.

³³Joseph F. Smith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 347.

³⁴Ibid., p. 298.

³⁵Ibid., p. 299.

As the new year began, Brother Phelps received more important correspondence from the Prophet Joseph which was sent from Kirtland on January 14, 1833. In this letter the Prophet issued a stronger warning when he wrote:

I send you the "olive leaf" which we have plucked from the tree of paradise, (Section 88, Doctrine and Covenants) the Lord's message of peace to us; for though our brethren in Zion indulge in feelings towards us, which are not according to the requirements of the new covenant, . . . Let me say unto you, seek to purify yourselves, and also all the inhabitants of Zion, lest the Lord's anger be kindled to fierceness. Repent, repent, is the voice of God to Zion; and strange as it may appear, yet it is true, mankind will persist in self-justification until all their iniquity is exposed . . . I say to you (and what I say to you I say to all,) hear the warning voice of God, lest Zion fall, and the Lord swear in His wrath the inhabitants of Zion shall not enter into His rest.³⁶

Then warning him more sharply than before, the Prophet wrote:

Our hearts are greatly grieved at the spirit which is breathed both in your letter and that of Brother Gilbert's the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence; and if it is not detected and driven from you, it will ripen Zion for the threatened judgments of God. Remember God sees the secret springs of human action, and knows the hearts of all living.

It is vain to try to hide a bad spirit from the eyes of them who are spiritual, for it will show itself in speaking and in writing, as well as in all our other conduct.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., p. 316.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 317. Also commenting on the conduct and attitude of W. W. Phelps were Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith, in a letter they wrote on the same date. "Brother Phelps' letter of December 15th is also received and carefully read; it betrays a lightness of spirit that ill becomes a man placed in the important and responsible station that he is placed in. If you have fat beef, and potatoes, eat them in singleness of heart, and boast not yourselves in these things . . . Brother Phelps requested in his last letter that Brother Joseph should come to Zion; but we say that Brother Joseph will not settle in Zion until she repent, and purify herself, and abide by the new covenant, and remember the commandments that have been given her, to do them as well as say them. Ibid., p. 319.

The Prophet Joseph's constant concern that the Star should be properly conducted is ever apparent in this letter, which closed thusly:

We wish you to render the Star as interesting as possible, by setting forth the rise, progress, and faith of the Church as well as the doctrines; for if you do not render it more interesting than at present, it will fall, and the Church suffer a great loss thereby.³⁸

As a consequence of the foregoing letter, Editor Phelps responded to the Prophet's advice by filling the Star's pages more and more with articles on Church doctrine. The April number contained a long article headed "Rise and Progress of the Church of Christ." In June, Phelps began publication of the first chapters of the Book of Mormon.

In a letter to Brother Phelps dated June 25, 1833, the Church presidency appended the following postscript:

We feel gratified with the way in which Brother William W. Phelps is conducting the Star at the present. We hope he will seek to render it more and more interesting.³⁹

However, dark clouds of trouble were gathering. The situation in Western Missouri in the early 1830's was a preying ground for "adventurers, speculators and petty thieves."⁴⁰

Rooted in the southern tradition, slave-minded, the settlers had come from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Southern Illinois. A sharp resentment soon sprang up between these older settlers and the new colony of Latter-day Saints, who were largely northerners. Almost totally alien to the older inhabitants was the religious zeal of the Latter-day Saints.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 317.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 367-68.

⁴⁰

Kansas City Star, Tuesday, February 17, 1948.

Belief in the Book of Mormon, a story of ancient America, made Latter-day Saints peculiarly sympathetic toward the Indians; and being themselves a minority body they were sensitive to the nations injustices to the Negro as well as to the Indians.

Politicians began to see political implications in the rapid spread of the new faith, and indirectly a threat to slave control. The Missourians reasoned that if the religious group voted in a solid block, the political fate of the state would be in the hands of the newcomers.

Even early in 1832, when Latter-day Saints had barely begun to filter into the new regions, irritations arose. In the same year accusations were made that the Saints were sowing the seeds of sedition among the slaves.⁴¹

Not until April, 1833, however, did the Star give more than a hint of the rapidly developing opposition to the Church. Only in the last number of the Star issued from Independence, did Phelps record evidence that pointed a groundless optimism. "We have abundant reason to be thankful that we are permitted to establish ourselves under the protection of a government that . . . gives all its citizens a privilege of worshipping God according to their own desire."⁴²

The thunder from the gathering storm over Western Missouri finally broke in July, 1833; a few days after that month's Star came off the press.

It was inevitable that word of the new faith should reach the ears of the Negro. It was inevitable too, that some of their number should wish to join the church in Missouri. But a Missouri statute permitted immigration only of those who had a certificate of citizenship from another state.

Upon learning that a small number of Negroes were planning the trip to Missouri, Phelps published in the July Star a reprint of the Missouri law, "to prevent any misunderstanding among the churches abroad respecting free people of color,* who may think of coming to the western boundaries of Missouri as members of the Church."

⁴¹
Ibid.

⁴²
Banks, op. cit., p. 325.

*Free people of color" were negroes or mulattoes who were set free through the kindness of their masters, or who, by working extra hours, for which they were sometimes allowed pay, were able at last to purchase

"Slaves are real estate in this and other states," Editor Phelps continued, "and wisdom would dictate great care among the branches of the Church of Christ on the subject. So long as we have no special rule in the church, as to people of color, let prudence guide, and while they, as well as we, are in the hands of a merciful God," he added, "we say: Shun the very appearance of evil."⁴³

However, the publishing of this law and the above statement by Editor Phelps was the very excuse that certain "trouble makers" needed to inflame the "old settler" against the Saints which would eventually lead to the expulsion from Independence and Jackson County.⁴⁴ They interpreted this article "to be an invitation to free people of color to settle in Jackson County!"⁴⁵

As a consequence of the foregoing situation, Brother Phelps published an extra on the 16th of July, in addition to the regular issue of the Star, which said:

Our intention was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to this state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the church.* . . . Great care should be

their liberty.--B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Century I: Vol. I: Published by the Church Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1930), p. 327.

⁴³The Kansas City Star, Ibid.

⁴⁴Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 328.

⁴⁵Ibid.

* Roberts points out in making the statement that it was the intention of the Star article not only to stop "free people of color" emigrating to Missouri, but also to "prevent them from being admitted as members of the church," the editor of the Star, of course, went too far; if not in his second article, explaining the scope and meaning of the first, then in the first article; for he had no authority to seek to prevent "free people of color" from being admitted members of the church. But as a matter of fact, there were very few if any "free people of color" in the church at that time. -- B. H. Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 328-329.

taken on this point. The saints must shun every appearance of evil. As to slaves we have nothing to say. In connection with the wonderful events of this age, much is doing towards abolishing slavery, and colonizing the blacks in Africa.

We often lament the situation of our sister states in the south, and we fear, lest as has been the case, the blacks should rise and spill innocent blood: for they are ignorant, and a little may lead them to disturb the peace of society. To be short, we are opposed to have free people be admitted to the state; and we say, that none will be admitted into the church, for we are determined to obey the laws and constitutions of our country, that we may have that protection which the sons of liberty inherit from the legacy of Washington, through the favorable auspices of a Jefferson and Jackson.^{46*}

Notwithstanding W. W. Phelps' attempt to "allay the fears, real or imagined," of the "old settlers," here, they said, "was an open invitation to all free Negroes to enter the state."⁴⁷ Furthermore, many of the leaders of the Missourians made the accusation that "this article was merely published to give directions and cautions to be observed by 'colored brethren' to enable them upon their arrival to Missouri to claim citizenship."⁴⁸

As a result of these fears, a committee called upon Brother Phelps and others, demanding that they stop publishing the Morning and Evening Star and close down the printing office; and that as the leaders

⁴⁶ B. H. Roberts, op. cit., p. 328.

⁴⁷ Kansas City Star, Ibid.

⁴⁸ Roberts, op. cit., p. 328.

"The fears of the Missourians on that head were sheer fabrications of evil-disposed minds," writes Roberts. "I have been particular in examining the charges made against the saints by their enemies in Jackson county, in order that it may be known that wherein the things charged were not in and of themselves innocent, and no cause for offense whatever, they were utterly without foundation of truth."

One blot, however, remained on the Star's record. In the face of a mob, W. W. Phelps in the Star Extra had finally retreated from his editorial championship of the Negro. He had betrayed in the end the cause which both he and the Church had vigorously supported. The paper had done little to abate mob violence; in the eyes of the saints it had done much to discredit their editor.--Banks, op. cit., p. 333.

of the Mormons, they agree to move out of the county. The brethren asked for three months in which to consider their demands; and give them proper time to consult the leaders at Ohio. This appeal was denied. They asked for ten days; which appeal was also turned down; fifteen minutes was all they would allow in which to decide.

The committee returned and reported to their members the results of their meeting with the Mormon leaders and added that they "refused to give a direct answer." The "Missourians" then decided to destroy the printing press and burn the printing office.⁴⁹

Thus, on July 20, 1833, Brother Phelps was attending to his duties in the printing office.⁵⁰ He was in the process of printing the Book of Commandments* when the mob attacked his house, which also housed the printing establishment.⁵¹ They destroyed the press,⁵² pried the type, scattered the furniture of Brother and Sister Phelps in the street and garden; the revelations,⁵³ bookwork and papers were nearly all destroyed or kept by the mob; and the house and printing office were both leveled to the ground.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 332.

⁵⁰ Jensen, op. cit., p. 693.

⁵¹ Edwards, op. cit., p. 19.

⁵² See Appendix E, p. 219.

⁵³ See Appendix F, p. 220.

⁵⁴ Roberts, op. cit., pp. 332-33.

*No later work was done on the Book of Commandments, but some copies of the printed matter were gathered and subsequently bound by private individuals. Five folds of the book were set and printed at the time of the catastrophe and the work had progressed to p. 160, the last words set being "the blood of Ephraim" in paragraph 47 of Chapter 65. (Sec. 64:7)--Edwards, op. cit., p. 19.

On the 20th of July when the mob had met by appointment (about 500 in number), it was fortunate for Sister Phelps that among those in the mob was a man whose wife had recently had a baby, whom Sister Phelps had taken care of during her confinement. As the proceedings took place the man quietly withdrew from the plotting mob and under cover of darkness, ran all the way to the Phelps home. He warned Sister Phelps and told her to dress the children while he hitched a team. Sister Phelps, with a sick infant in her arms, and all of the children but two, were immediately loaded in the wagon. The man turned and ran back into the house, took some freshly baked bread out of the oven, wrapped it in a tablecloth, then said, "Go, now, Sister Phelps, as fast and as far as you can."

When they reached a hill, she looked back and saw the place in flames (actually the books were burning.)

The would-be mobster then warned Brother Phelps, who immediately hid himself from the coming mob. Sister Phelps didn't know where he was or if he was yet alive.⁵⁵

Fortunately, Brother and Sister Phelps had lost no time in heeding the warning. In the rush, however, two of the boys were left in the building. After the mob had destroyed the house, young Henry Phelps, together with a younger brother, were literally buried under the brick and debris. They were so completely covered that they could not free themselves and had to remain in their uncomfortable position until they were dug out by friends.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Unpublished material, received in a letter from Lydia Stowell, Bloomington, California.

⁵⁶ Phelps file, unpublished material in Church Historians Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

After the mob had ceased yelling and retired, the Saints who had been driven into the night began returning from their hiding places "in thickets, corn fields, woods and groves, and viewed with heavy hearts the scenery of desolation.."

There lay the printing office, a heap of ruins;* Brother Phelps' furniture strewn over the garden as common plunder; the revelations, bookwork, papers and press in the hands of the mob as the booty of highway robbers.^{57**}

To say the least, these were truly trying times for the Phelps family!

Greater Love Hath No Man

Three days later a mob of five hundred entered Independence, displaying the emblem of lawlessness -- a red flag. They made threats to "whip any 'Mormon' whom they captured, with from fifty to five hundred

*The Evening and Morning Star was not the first or the last newspaper to be destroyed by a mob. One writer lists eleven separate outrages against Missouri papers from 1833 to 1865. All of these listed, with the exception of the violence against the Star, were in connection with Civil War troubles, primarily.--Banks, op. cit., pp. 327-28.

⁵⁷Times and Seasons, Vol. 6, No. 5, March 15, 1845, p. 832.

**Roberts further informs us that the outrages of this day were the more reprehensible because of the character of the leaders of the mob. In the main they were county officers -- the county judge, the constables, clerks of the court, and justices of the peace; while Lilburn W. Boggs, the lieutenant governor, -- who resided in Jackson county -- the second officer in the state, was there quietly looking on and secretly aiding every measure of the mob -- and who, walking among the ruins of the printing office and house of W. W. Phelps, remarked to some of the brethren, "You now know what our Jackson boys can do, and you must leave the county." --Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 333-34.

Loy Otis Banks makes this interesting observation that "a year before this it was Colonel Lilburn W. Boggs who mailed the Star's prospectus to the Columbia editor. Already, Boggs, soon to be Missouri's governor, was taking a keen interest in the new religious colony. Before the decade was ended, the Saints would find their fortunes, and in some instances their lives, in the hands of this high state official." How true this statement proved to be! Banks, op. cit., p. 325.

lashes each, demolish their dwellings, and turn negroes loose to destroy their fields."⁵⁸ At the same time armed with "rifles, pistols, dirks, whips and clubs" they rode and scattered in every direction searching for the leading brethren.⁵⁹

This is possibly where another incident happened to Sister Phelps. It seems as if members of the mob again entered where she was staying and ordered her to "get out of the house." "Why do I have to get out of the house?" she exclaimed. They replied, "It's none of your business, but get out!" Sister Phelps made the demand that "If you're going to kick me out I want my rocking chair." They gave it to her and then proceeded to destroy the house.⁶⁰

At the same time the mob was "making the day hideous with their inhuman yells and wicked oaths:"

We will rid Jackson county of the Mormons peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must. If they will not go without, we will whip and kill the men; we will destroy their children, and *ravish their women!⁶¹

⁵⁸ Joseph F. Smith, Essentials in Church History (Thirteenth Ed., Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1953), pp. 160-61.

⁵⁹ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 337-38.

⁶⁰ Unpublished material from Alice Phelps (Mrs. J. A. Malin), 1025 Marilyn Drive, Mt. View, California, in a letter sent to the writer.

⁶¹ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 337-38.

* It was the diabolical threat made above to "ravish their women" that led the six brethren, recognized as leaders among the Saints, to sign the agreement to leave the state. Oliver Cowdery makes the statement: "What could be the object of these men in killing husbands and exposing to death the lives of infants? That they might gratify their wantonness upon innocent mothers and virgins? for this was their last threat which caused those six on the 23rd of July, last, to agree to leave the county of Jackson.-- Roberts, Ibid.

Realizing the situation, W. W. Phelps and others offered themselves as a ransom to the mob on behalf of the Saints. They were willing to be "scourged, or even put to death" if the mob would cease their destruction and abuses.⁶²

The sacrifice, however, was not accepted but was followed with the additional threat that "not only they, but every man, woman, and child, would be whipped or scourged until they consented to leave the county, as the 'old settlers' had decreed that the 'Mormons' should leave the county or they 'or the Mormons must die.'"⁶³

This demonstration of mob violence on July 23rd, which followed the destruction of the printing press and home of Brother Phelps convinced the leading brethren that there was no alternative but to withdraw from the county.

The following extracts from the Jeffersonian Republican newspaper of Jefferson, Missouri, gave the terms of the Missourians.

. . . the committee reported to the meeting, that they had waited on most of the Mormon leaders, consisting of the bishop, Mr. Partridge, Mr. Phelps, editor of the Star, Mr. Gilbert, the keeper of the Lord's storehouse, and Messrs. Carrill Whitmer, and Mosley, elders of the church, and that the said committee had entered into an amicable agreement with them which they had reduced to writing, which they submitted; and that the committee have assured Mr. Phelps that whenever he was ready to move, that the amount of all his losses should be paid to him by the citizens. The written agreement is as follows:⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 337-38.

⁶⁴ Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc. News clippings, 1831-38, Vol. 6, Brigham Young University, p. 37.

Memorandum of agreement between the undersigned of the Mormon society, in Jackson county, Missouri, and a committee appointed by a public meeting of the citizens of said county, made the 23rd day of July, 1833.

It is understood that the undersigned members of the society, do give their solemn pledges, each, for himself, as follows, to wit:

That Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps, Wm. McClelland, Edward Partridge, Lyman Wight, Simson Carter, Peter and John Whitmer, and Harvey Whitlock, shall remove with their families out of this county, on or before the first day of January next, and that they, as well as the two hereinafter named, use all their influence to induce all the brethren now here to move as soon as possible--one half, say, by the first of January next, and all by the first day of April next. To advise and try all means in their power, to stop any more of their sect from moving to this county; and as to those now on the road, they will use their influence to prevent their settling permanently in the county, but that they shall only make arrangements for temporary shelter, till a new location is agreed on for the society. John Corrill and Algernon Sidney Gilbert are allowed to remain as general agents to wind up the business of the society, so long as necessity shall require; and said Gilbert may sell out his merchandise now on hand but is to make no new importation.⁶⁵

The Star is not again to be published, nor a press set up by any of the society in this county.

If the said Edward Partridge and W. W. Phelps move their families by the first day of January, as aforesaid, that they themselves will be allowed to go and come in order to transact and wind up their business.⁶⁶

Driven from Jackson County

Under these conditions, on September, 1833, W. W. Phelps and Orson Hyde were dispatched as messengers to Jefferson City, with a petition to Governor Daniel Dunklin. They presented the petition to him on October 8, 1833. He told them that "he would inform them of his conclusions by mail."⁶⁷ The brethren then returned to Independence, Missouri.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁷ Jensen, op. cit., p. 693.

On October 19, 1833, the Governor sent an encouraging letter, in which he gave the Saints hope of redress and protection for the future. Thus, encouraged and buoyed up in spirit, the Saints continued to live in Jackson county and tried to obtain the protection of the courts. However, this led to renewed persecution and on this occasion the future Governor Boggs warned Brother Phelps and others to "flee for their lives" or be killed.

Taking Boggs at his word, W. W. Phelps and others made good their escape into Clay county, Missouri.⁶⁸

Another petition was drawn up, and on December 6, 1833, sent to Governor Dunklin. William W. Phelps wrote the following letter which accompanied this petition:

Liberty, December 6, 1833

Dear Sir:--Your Excellency will perceive by the petition, bearing date with this letter, that we intend to return to Jackson county as soon as arrangements can be made to protect us after we are reinstated in our possessions.

We do not wish to go till we know that our lives are not in danger from the lawless mob. Your Excellency will understand that at this inclement season it will require time to restore us, and troops to protect us after we are there, for the threats of the mob have not ceased.

Your obedient servant,

/s/ W. W. Phelps

To Daniel Dunklin, Governor of Missouri⁶⁹

Brother Phelps, as one of the leaders of the Church in Missouri, continued to plead with the authorities of the state of Missouri for the rights of the Saints. However, there were no desired results. "The

⁶⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 438.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 449-50.

governor's answers were favorable, yet evasive."⁷⁰

Fride Cometh Before a Fall

During the stress and strain of those hectic days, William W. Phelps never failed to keep the Prophet Joseph informed on all that transpired. Joseph Smith received a letter dated December 15, 1833, which, in part, read:

The condition of the scattered Saints is lamentable and affords a gloomy prospect. We are in Clay, Ray, Lafayette, Jackson, Van Buren, and other counties, and cannot hear from one another oftener than we do from you. I know it was right that we should be driven out of the land of Zion, that the rebellious might be sent away. But brethren, if the Lord will, I should like to know what the honest in heart shall do? Our clothes are worn out, we want the necessaries of life, and shall we lease, buy, or otherwise obtain land where we are, to till, that we may raise enough to eat? Such is the common language of the honest, for they want to do the will of God. I am sensible that we shall not be able to live again in Zion till God or the President rules out the mob.

The Governor is willing to restore us, but as the constitution gives him no power to guard us when back, we are not willing to go. The mob swear if we come we shall die! If, from what has been done in Zion, we, or the most of us, have got to be persecuted from city to city, and from synogogue to synogogue we want to know it; for there are those among us that would rather earn eternal life on such conditions than lose it; but we hope for better things and shall wait patiently for the word of the Lord.⁷¹

Two months later, under date of February 27, 1834, W. W. Phelps wrote to the brethren in Kirtland informing them of the "farcical effort" of the officers of Missouri to enforce the law. Brother Phelps points out that he had:

Just returned from Independence, the seat of war in the West. About a dozen of our brethren were sub-poenaed in behalf of the state; and on the 23rd of February, about 12 o'clock, we were on

⁷⁰Jensen, op. cit., p. 693

⁷¹

Smith, op. cit., pp. 457-58.

the bank opposite Everett's Ferry, where we found Captain Atchison's company of "Liberty Blues"-- nearly fifty rank and file -- ready to guard us into Jackson county. The soldiers were well armed with United States muskets, bayonets fixed, etc., and to me the scene was "passing strange," and long to be remembered; the martial law in force to guard the civil! . . .

Early in the morning we marched, strongly guarded by the troops, to the seat of war, and quartered in the blockhouse; . . . after breakfast we were visited by the District Attorney, Mr. Reese, and the Attorney General, Mr. Wells, From them we learned that all hopes of criminal prosecutions were at an end. Atchison informed me that he had just received an order from the judge that his company's service was no longer wanted in Jackson county; and we were marched out of town to the tune of Yankee Doodle, in quick time, and soon returned to our camp without the loss of any lives. . . .

Before a crop is harvested it becomes ripe of itself. The dreadful deeds now done in Jackson county, with impunity, must bring matters to a focus shortly. Within two or three weeks past some of the most savage acts ever witnessed have been committed by these bitter branches. Old Father Lindsey, whose locks have been whitened by the blasts of nearly seventy winters, had his house thrown down after he was driven from it; his goods, corn, etc., piled together and fire put to it, but fortunately after the mob retired, his son extinguished it.

The mob has quit whipping and now beats with clubs. Lyman Leonard, had two chairs broken to splinters upon him, and then was dragged out of doors and beat with clubs till he was supposed to be dead, but he is yet alive. Josiah Sumner and Barnet Cole were severely beaten at the same time. The mob have commenced burning houses, stacks, etc.; and we shall not think it out of their power, by any means, to proceed to murder any of our people that shall try to live in that county, or perhaps, only go there.

Such scenes as are happening around us are calculated to arouse feelings and passions in all, and to strengthen the faith and fortify the hearts of the Saints for great things. Our Savior laid down His life for our sakes, and shall we, who profess to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God -- shall we, the servants of the Lord of the vineyard, who are called and chosen to prune it for the last time -- shall we fear, verily we, who are enlightened by the wisdom of heaven -- shall we fear to do at least this much for Jesus who has done so much for us? No; we will obey the voice of the Spirit that God may overcome the world.

I am a servant, etc.,

/s/ W. W. Phelps⁷²

Such letters were written to the brethren in Ohio by Brother Phelps and others. That some of them contained "sharp, piercing and cutting reproofs" which were not altogether warranted is evident in a letter from the Prophet, dated Kirtland, March 30, 1834:

We admire the confidence and love which our brethren have manifested in them, in giving us sharp, piercing and cutting reproofs, which are calculated to wake us up, and make us search about ourselves and put a double watch over ourselves in all things that we do. And we acknowledge that it is our duty to receive all reproofs and chastisements given of the spirit of the most holy one. And if being chastized and reprov'd of what we are guilty, seems not to be joyous for the present, but gracious, oh how wounding and how poignant must it be to receive chastisement and reproofs for things that we are not guilty of, from a source we least expect them, arising from a distrustful, a fearful and jealous spirit. However, we feel to make all allowances and reflect seriously and consider upon all sides before we make an effort to throw off the yoke, lest we should be found in anywise blamable before God. There are some items contained in Brother William's letter, by the way of reproof, that we feel to give, we think, some reasonable excuses, that you may know how far you have reasons to give reproof, that you may not have wrong feelings concerning those to whom you accepted in Christ Jesus, who always will be found true to all confidence that shall be imposed in them.

First, you have given us to understand that there are glaring errors in the revelations, or rather have shown us the most glaring ones which are not calculated to suit the refinement of the age in which we live, of the great man, etc. We would say by way of excuse that we did not think so much of the orthography or the manner as we did of the subject matter; as the word of God means what it says; and it is the word of God, . . .

Now the fact is, if we have made any mistakes in punctuation, or spelling, it has been done in consequence of Brother Oliver having come from Zion in great afflictions, through much fatigue and anxiety, and being sent contrary to his expectations to New York, and obtaining press and types, and hauling them up to the midst of mobs, when he and I and all the Church in Kirtland, had to lie every night for a long time upon our arms, to keep off mobs of forties, or eighties, and of hundreds to save our lives and the press and that we might not be scattered and driven to the four winds! And all this in the midst of every kind of confusion and calamity, and in the sorrowful tale of Zion, for the sake of Zion, that the word of God might be printed and sent forth by confidential brethren to the different churches, for the churches are just like you -- they will not receive anything but by revelation.

Oh man should not attempt to steady the Ark of God! . . . It is my disposition to give and forgive, and to bear and to forbear, with all long suffering and patience with the foibles, follies, weaknesses and wickedness of my brethren and all the world of mankind, and my confidence and love towards you is not slackened nor weakened.

And what do you suppose he could do with a few mobbers, in Jackson county, where, ere long, he will set his feet, when earth and heaven shall tremble! Be united brethren, in all your moves, and stand by each other, even unto death, that you may prevail.

I remain your brother in the New Covenant.

/s/ Joseph Smith, Jun.

P. S. To Brother William -- You say "My press, my types, etc." Where, our brethren ask, did you get them and how came they to be yours?" No hardness, but a caution, for you know that it is We, not I, and all things are the Lord's, and he opened the hearts of his Church to furnish these things, or we should not have been privileged with using them.⁷³

In addition to the previous warnings from the Prophet Joseph in his letters, it should also be noted that two days before Brother Phelps assisted in the dedication of the temple site in Jackson county, Missouri, on August 3, 1831, the Lord warned that he should:

. . . stand in the office to which I have appointed him, and receive his inheritance in the land;

And also he hath need to repent, for I, the Lord am not well pleased with him, for he seeketh to excel, and he is not sufficiently meek before me.⁷⁴

In addition to Joseph's letter, Oliver Cowdery included the following to W. W. Phelps:

In your letter to the brethren by Parley and Lyman you wish us to represent the importance of your request, but I know not as I could say anything which would awaken them to activity in

⁷³ Copied from the Oliver Cowdery Letter Book in the Huntington Library at Los Angeles. On micro-film at Brigham Young University.

⁷⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 58:40-41.

the cause of Zion anymore than they are now. Night and day with every means they cease not to labor, and I can safely say, that they think and long for her deliverance as much as those who have lives upon her consecrated soil.

Your request relative to clothing shall be properly considered. I will just remind you that your reproofs though designed for the best, are calculated to make a different impression when written, than when given orally -- the fact is, it is a long distance to reprove for small things in these days of great events There are many errors in spelling, which cannot be avoided yet; the boys are young, and it is not as it was with four or five proof reading, and with the incessant labor which is necessary for such to perform it could not be expected that everything would be perfect.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, as a result of this correspondence from Brother Phelps and other local leaders, special blessings were to come from Kirtland, Ohio, in 1834.

Coming of Zion's Camp

When the Prophet Joseph wrote "be united brethren in all your moves, and stand by each other, even unto death, that you may prevail," he portrayed the spirit of the brethren at Kirtland who formed Zion's camp and were preparing to come to the aid of the brethren in Missouri. The purpose of this expedition was to restore the Saints to their lands in Jackson county.

W. W. Phelps and others joined the brethren of "zion's Camp" on June 18, 1834, the night they camped "on an elevated piece of land between two branches of the Fishing River."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Oliver Cowdery Letter Book in the Huntington Library at Los Angeles. On micro-film at Brigham Young University.

⁷⁶ Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball, An Apostle: the father and founder of the British Mission (Published by the Kimball Family; Salt Lake City, Utah. Printed at the Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), p. 67.

Heber C. Kimball records:

. . . we received much information from the brethren who had been driven from Jackson county, and learned of the fixed determination of our enemies to drive or exterminate them from that county.⁷⁷

The camp from here resumed their march until they finally camped on the bank of Rush Creek in a Brother Burket's field at Liberty, Clay County. It was here that Brother Phelps received a spiritual blessing; for he was:

. . . called and chosen, and it was appointed unto him to receive his endowment* with power from on high, and help to carry on the printing establishment in Kirtland, until Zion is redeemed.⁷⁸

On July 3, 1834, a special meeting of High Priests** was held, on which occasion a Stake organization was created. David Whitmer was president with William Wines Phelps and John Whitmer as councilors.⁷⁹

Inasmuch as Brother Phelps had been called to Kirtland "to help carry on the printing establishment," it was determined in this meeting that he should leave his family in Missouri and "that he have an honorable discharge from his station in Zion for a season."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Smith, op. cit., p. 112.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 125.

*"While Zion's Camp was camped in a Brother Burket's field at Liberty, Clay County, Missouri, the Prophet called among others, Thomas Marsh, and appointed him to receive his endowment in Kirtland--(This is not to be confused with The Endowment which was not revealed to the Church until the Illinois period as proved by Marsh's statements to Wandle Mace, Chap. VI of thesis. It probably refers to some of the preliminaries to the endowment which were given in Kirtland or to his further Priesthood callings." Walter C. Lichfield, Thomas B. Marsh, Physician to the Church, unpublished manuscript, Brigham Young University, 1956, pp. 46-47.

**In June, 1831, he was ordained an Elder by Joseph Smith, and later the same year was ordained a High Priest. Jensen, op. cit., p. 693.

CHAPTER IV

CALLED TO KIRTLAND

Farewell our wives and children,
Who render life so sweet;
Dry up your tears -- be faithful,
Till we again shall meet.

--W. W. Phelps

Back to Kirtland, Ohio

Leaving his wife and family* at Liberty, in Clay county, Missouri, William Wines Phelps and his oldest son, William Waterman, in company with John Whitmer started for Kirtland, Ohio, on April 25, 1835.¹

They traveled from Independence to St. Louis on the Missouri River, from St. Louis on the Mississippi to its junction with the Ohio, and from there up the Ohio to Portsmouth, and from this point up the Ohio canal through Chillicothe to Cleveland, Ohio, from here to Kirtland where they arrived on May 16, 1835.²

In his letters to his wife, after his arrival, Brother Phelps writes:

Kirtland has altered a great deal since we lived here. It is growing very fast indeed, but I do not like it as well as home, (Missouri) or any other place that I have seen. Our

¹Jensen, op. cit., p. 694.

²Journal History, May 16, 1835.

* Brother Phelps at this time was the father of seven living children, ranging in age from nineteen years to three months. Improvement Era, Vol. 45, 1942, p. 529.

passage from Missouri to Kirtland was not as quick as it might have been, but I thank the Lord that we got here safe. . . . I live now at President Smith's. There are at present three stores in this town, two of which belong to the Church.³

Describing the conditions at Kirtland he wrote:

You are not aware how much sameness there is among the Saints in Kirtland. They keep the Word of Wisdom in Kirtland; they drink cold water, and don't even mention tea and coffee; they pray night and morning and everything seems to say: Behold the Lord is nigh. But it is hard living here; flour costs from \$6.00 to \$7.00 a barrel and cows from \$20.00 to \$30.00 a head. It is a happy thing that I did not move back for everything here is so dear. Our brethren are so poor and hard run for money that it would have been more than I could have done to maintain my family⁴

Following the first Sabbath at Kirtland, W. W. Phelps also wrote:

President Smith preached last Sabbath and I gave him the text: "This is my beloved son; hear ye him!" He preached one of the greatest sermons I ever heard; it was about three and one half hours long, and unfolded more mysteries than I can write at this time. The congregations of Saints at Kirtland are larger than any we used to have at Canandigua, Ontario county, New York, and when any of the world come in, we have what may well be called "A large congregation."⁵

The Doctrine and Covenants

W. W. Phelps mentioned in his letters that he, with his son Waterman, had made their home with the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was immediately assigned to assist a committee in compiling the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.⁶ This was the second time Brother Phelps had assisted in trying to publish revelations of the Lord. In reference to the first attempt in Missouri, the Messenger and Advocate published the following

³"Journal History," July 2, 1835.

⁴Ibid., May 26, 1835.

⁵Ibid., June 2, 1835.

⁶Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 227.

statement of W. W. Phelps:

Since the commencement of this work, even in Missouri, where, just before it was ready to come out, it fell into the hands of a mob, our anxiety and exertions have been unabated, to put in the possession of the Saints, and all who feel a desire to be saved. We have greatly desired that this little sacred volume might go into the world, that the inhabitants thereof might know what the Lord was about to do in the last days . . . we bear testimony that the revelations therein contained are true and faithful.⁷

On the 17th of August, a general meeting of the Church was held at Kirtland. The purpose of this assembly was to approve the Doctrine and Covenants; that they may "become a law and a rule of faith and practice to the Church."⁸

During this meeting, Brother Phelps bore strong testimony that the record being presented to them was true. He then read to those present, the testimony of the Twelve Apostles as follows:

We therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost shed forth upon us, that these Commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men, and are verily true. We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world, in the which we rejoice exceedingly, praying the Lord always that the children of men may be profited thereby.⁹

Following this, W. W. Phelps read an article on marriage,¹⁰ which was also "accepted and ordered to be printed in the Doctrine and Covenants."¹¹

⁷Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 11, October 1835, p. 170.

⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 243.

⁹Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁰See Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. II, pp. 246-47.

¹¹Ibid., p. 246.

He also explained:

These lectures are being compiled and arranged with other documents of instruction and regulation for the Church, titled "Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter-day Saints," etc. It may be well, for the information of the churches abroad, to say, that this book will contain the important revelations on doctrine and church government now extant, and will, we trust, give them a perfect understanding of the doctrine believed by this society. Such a work has long been called for and if we are prospered a few weeks, shall have this volume ready for distribution. . . .¹²

Brother Phelps later published the following article in the

Messenger and Advocate:

. . . in this month's paper, it will be seen that the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Latter-day Saints, is nearly ready for sale. At any rate it may be expected in the course of a month, as one thousand copies have already been delivered to the binder.

.
We hope and pray that the Saints may be as anxious to keep the commandments, and be governed by the Doctrine and Covenants, contained in said book, as they have been for its publication: if they do observe all the requirements towards perfecting themselves in holiness, that they may serve the Lord acceptably with "clean hands and pure hearts," . . .¹³

With this knowledge and with a "hope and prayer" in his heart,

Brother Phelps wrote the following to the Saints on September 9, 1835:

The spirit whispers me that the instructions already given . . . will be sufficient to keep every member in the way of duty till the Doctrine and Covenants arrive, when all can choose for themselves.¹⁴

The Doctrine and Covenants were soon to arrive. On September 16, 1835, W. W. Phelps again writes to the Saints in Missouri:

. . . We received some of the Commandments from Cleveland

¹²Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 8, May 1835, p. 122.

¹³Ibid., October 1835, p. 170.

¹⁴Phelps Letters, September 9, 1835, Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

last week. I shall try and send 100 copies to the Saints in Zion this fall by Brother William Tippetts; he starts next week. I know there are 100 Saints who will have their dollar ready when he arrives for a book. We put them at a dollar in order to help us a little, considering how much we have lost by the Jackson mob. I would not be without one for \$5.00 . . .¹⁵

In his next letter he states:

By the time you get this letter the "covenants" will arrive and the Saints must learn their duty from the Revelations. We must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,¹⁶ and not by what is written by man or is spoken by man.

The Book of Abraham

In the June issue of the Messenger and Advocate, appeared an article by W. W. Phelps which stated:

. . . . New light is occasionally bursted into our minds, of the sacred scriptures, for which I am truly thankful. We shall by and by learn that we were with God in another world, before the foundation of the world, and had our agency; that we came into this world and have our agency, in order that we may prepare ourselves for a kingdom of glory; become archangels, even the sons of God where the man is neither without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord: A consummation of glory, and happiness, and perfection so greatly to be wished, that I would not miss of it for the fame of ten worlds.¹⁷

Part of this "new light" appeared on July 3, 1835, when Michael H. Chandler came to Kirtland to exhibit some Egyptian mummies.¹⁸ In a letter to his wife, Brother Phelps wrote:

The last of June four Egyptian mummies were brought here; there were two papyrus rolls, besides some other ancient Egyptian writings with them. As no one could translate these writings, they were presented to President Smith. He soon knew what they were and said that they, the "rolls of papyrus" contained the sacred record kept of Joseph in Pharaoh's Court in

¹⁵"Journal History," September 16, 1835.

¹⁶Phelps Letters, (no date), Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁷Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 9, June, 1835, p. 130.

¹⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 235.

Egypt, and the teachings of Father Abraham. God has so ordered it that these mummies and writings have been brought in the Church, and the sacred writings I had just locked up in Brother Joseph's house when your letter came, so I had two consolations of good things in one day. These records of old times, when we translate them and print them in a book, will make a good witness for the Book of Mormon. There is nothing secret or hidden that shall not be revealed, and they come to the Saints . . .¹⁹

On the fifth of July, the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded:

Soon after this some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus, a description of which will appear hereafter, and with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc., -- a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth.²⁰

Again, on the afternoon of October 1, the Prophet Joseph recorded:

I labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with Brothers Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps, and during the research, the principles of astronomy as understood by Father Abraham and the ancients unfolded to our understanding, the particulars which will appear hereafter.²¹

This was a tremendous period of doctrinal development in the history of the Church. Brother Phelps was, indeed, fortunate to have the privilege of acting as a scribe to the Prophet Joseph. His future writings allude, many times, to the Book of Abraham and the Book of Moses. For example, on December 25, 1844, he wrote from Nauvoo, Illinois, to William Smith, as follows:

¹⁹ The Improvement Era, Vol. 45, 1942, p. 529.

²⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 236.

²¹ Ibid., p. 266.

. . . Well, now Brother William, when the house of Israel begin to come into the glorious mysteries of the kingdom, and find that Jesus Christ, whose goings forth, as the prophets said, have been from old, from eternity: and that eternity, agreeable to the records found in the catacombs of Egypt, had been going on in this system, (not this world) almost two thousand five hundred and fifty five millions of years: and to know at the same time, that deists, geologists, and others are trying to prove that matter must have existed hundreds of thousands of years:-- it almost tempts the flesh to fly to God, or master faith like Enoch to be translated and see and know as we are seen and known!²²

However, the Saints were making every effort toward the completion of the Kirtland Temple. This occupied the time of the brethren and the translation was not advanced. Brother Phelps writes, in a letter to Sally, his wife, on September 11, 1835, that "Nothing has been doing in translation of the Egyptian record for a long time, and probably will not for some time to come" ²³

The House of the Lord

In his first letter to Sally, upon arrival at Kirtland, W. W.

Phelps wrote:

--- A new idea, Sally, if you and I continue faithful to the end, we are certain to be one in the Lord throughout eternity; this is one of the most glorious consolations we can have in the flesh. ²⁴

His letters also portray his anxiety towards receiving his endowments:

Keep up your faith and pray for the endowment; as soon as that takes place the Elders will anxiously speed for their families. ²⁵

²²Times and Seasons, Jan. 1, 1845, Vol. 5, No. 24, p. 756.

²³Phelps Letters, September 11, 1835, Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

²⁴"Journal History," May 26, 1835.

²⁵The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine (Vol. XXXI: Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1940), p. 30.

Later he writes: "I expect an endowment and I labor to forgive and be forgiven" ²⁶ In early January, he again wrote: "The whole work continually progresses, though but slowly, I cannot tell when the endowment will take place." ²⁷ Such statements are indicative that W. W. Phelps had an understanding of the purpose and far reaching significance of the Kirtland Temple.

Thus, after his arrival in Kirtland, W. W. Phelps subscribed \$500 toward the Temple. This subscription is indicative of the spirit and zeal of Brother Phelps, which he displayed while working towards the completion of the Temple. He was not a rich man, and like many other Saints, had given everything he possessed to the cause. ²⁸

It is little wonder that soon after his arrival at Kirtland, his letters contain such statements as, "The building of the Lord's house is progressing very fast meetings are already held in the Lord's house." ²⁹ Again, early in July of 1835 he published the following in the Messenger and Advocate:

. . . a few commenced the work; and though other important matters rolled round, which to many, would have seemed unsurmountable, and calculated to retard the progress of the building, still, the walls and the timbers of the roof were finished, being raised late last fall: and the roof is now covered.

This edifice is stone, to be completed on the outside with a

²⁶ Phelps Letters, loc. cit.

²⁷ Ibid., January 5, 1835.

²⁸ Jensen, op. cit., p. 694.

²⁹

"Journal History," July 20, 1835.

"hard finish of cement." Its length is eighty feet; its width, sixty; its height, from the ground to the top of the eaves, about fifty; from the basement forty-four, giving two stories of twenty-two feet each, besides an attic story in the roof for school rooms. It will be lighted with thirty-two Gothic, three Venetian, ten domar, one circular and two square gable windows. The dome of the steeple will be not far from 110 feet high, and the bell about ninety.

The sum expended, thus far, towards its erection, may be computed as about ten thousand dollars, and the whole cost, when finished, will probably be from twenty to thirty thousand. Like many houses for public worship, this house has been, so far, reared and must be finished, by donations from the saints, . . .³⁰

Also on October 27, 1835, Brother Phelps wrote:

When I look upon the House of the Lord and recount the expense of the printing office here I marvel to think how the Lord blesses us with means to build such a great house and to carry on such a vast business.³¹

Later on in the winter, he wrote:

Very great exertions have been made to finish the House of the Lord this winter. I suppose for the last fortnight, that nearly fifty men, as carpenters and joiners, masons, mortar makers, etc., have been laboring on the house . . . a great effort is now about to be made to procure a "bell" for the Lord's House.³²

On January 13, 1836, Brother Phelps, in a letter, informs the Saints in Missouri, that their meetings were growing more and more solemn and that they would continue to do so until the great solemn assembly when the temple would be finished. He also states that they were preparing to make themselves clean by forsaking their sins, forgiving everybody and cleaning their hearts; so as to come near to God.³³

³⁰ Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 10, July, 1835, p. 147.

³¹ "Journal History," October 27, 1835.

³² Phelps Letters, (no date), op. cit.

³³ Ibid., January 13, 1836.

In describing one of their solemn assemblies, W. W. Phelps writes:

A grand council was held last Wednesday (January 13th) consisting of the High Councils of Zion and Kirtland, together with the Twelve, and Seven Presidents of Seventy, and the two bishops and their counselors, besides others. It was one of the most interesting meetings I have ever attended. The next day (January 14th) I sat in council with the presidency to draft rules for the Lord's House. The next day (January 15th) we held another grand council, much more interesting than the first. On Sunday, (January 17th), at an early hour, all authorities of the Church regularly organized, met in the school room under our printing office, and the presidents commenced the meeting by confessing their sins and forgiving their brethren and the world. You know the Lord's prayer reads 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.' The Lord poured out His Spirit in such a manner as you never witnessed. When I was speaking, which was but few words, the spirit of the Lord came upon me so that I could not speak, and I cried as little children cry in earnest, and the tears from my eyes ran in streams; the audience, which was the largest ever convened in the said room, sobbed and wept aloud. The Presidency and the 'Twelve' occupied the forenoon. There was speaking and singing in tongues and prophesying as on the day of Pentecost. In the afternoon, the congregation became so large that after the three weddings, which I noticed were solemnized, and the sacrament administered, the meeting was dismissed. I then went with a number of the Church to Elder Cahoon's to partake of the wedding supper. It was a solemn time, singing and solemnity.³⁴

On March 27, 1836, the temple was dedicated. At the time of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, W. W. Phelps took a prominent seat during the dedicatory services, with the other Church authorities, and actively participated in these exercises. He received the ordinance of the washing of feet on March 29, 1836, in this sacred edifice.³⁵ Brother Phelps was also a witness to the miraculous appearances of personages that occurred in the temple. He later recorded:

³⁴"Journal History," January 17, 1836.

. . . he saw them for three hours (i. e. a circle of about forty persons dressed in white robes and caps in the upper story of the Temple in Kirtland, . . . After the endowments there was no person in that room at the time that was mortal; yet the room was filled with light and many personages did appear clothed in white, and frequently went to the windows and looked out, so that the brethren in the street could see them plainly.)³⁶

A major contribution to the above temple dedication was made by W. W. Phelps as a result of his special poetic ability. During the course of the proceedings, five of his songs were used. At least one of these songs is among the most popular of LDS hymns today, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning." Brother Phelps, indeed, had the spirit of the work and was intensely interested in every phase of its program, whether it be conducting a meeting, preaching a sermon, printing a newspaper for the Church, or writing poetry for its most sacred ceremonies.³⁷

Contemporary Events

During the eleven months that W. W. Phelps lived in Kirtland, he met frequently with the heads of the Church, where he labored for and in behalf of the Saints in Missouri.

When Emma Smith was appointed to make a selection of "sacred hymns" in September, 1835, W. W. Phelps was appointed to revise and arrange these hymns for printing as is explained in his letter to Sally on September 11, 1835, when he wrote: "I am now revising hymns for a hymnbook."³⁸

Contemporary with the preceding events was the commencing of a

³⁶ "Journal History," November 8, 1857.

³⁷ Webster Tucker, personal unpublished material, Brigham City, Utah.

³⁸ Jensen, op. cit., p. 694.

school for Elders, which began on November 2, 1835. In addition to this,

W. W. Phelps writes:

We calculate to commence a "School of the Prophets" as soon as we can. We shall begin to study Hebrew this winter.³⁹

On November 14, 1835, he wrote:

The Elders are coming in every day, almost; the school has commenced under the charge of President Sidney Rigdon as teacher. I shall not be able to go much, if any; President Cowdery has gone to New York to purchase tools for a book bindery and to secure some Hebrew books so that we may study Hebrew this winter. My time and that of President John Whitmer is all taken up in the printing office.⁴⁰

It is evident from the letters of Brother Phelps, that he did not have as much time for study as he desired. He wrote, on January 5, 1836:

The Hebrew School has commenced in one of the attic school rooms, in the Lord's House . . . I want to study Hebrew and I have not as yet been able to begin.⁴¹

The letters of William Wines Phelps, during these trying months, vividly portray the story of suffering, sorrow, and heartache he had at the separation from his wife and family. For example, he wrote from Kirtland:

Last evening we received your first letter after an absence of twelve weeks and twelve hours. Our tears of joy were the witness of its welcome reception. By these things we learn the value of each other's society and company, and friendship, and virtue. . . .

You say the roof of the house leaks: I have written to have another good roof put on over the one now on. You can get twelve penny nails out of the goods at Brother Corrill's; and anything else that you actually need that is among those goods, get and use

³⁹"Journal History," October 27, 1835.

⁴⁰Ibid., November 14, 1835.

⁴¹Phelps Letters, op. cit., January 5, 1836.

and I will settle the matter

I was sorry to hear that the cupboard fell down because I forgot to nail it, but now it is so. If there is not crockery enough at Brother Corrill's, go to Liberty and replenish it.⁴²

In addition to this, he wrote:

Myself, and Waterman, together with the Saints in general, are well, and we daily thank the Lord for it, praying constantly that he will have mercy upon you and 'our little ones,' and grant you the same blessing.

My anxiety for your welfare is inexpressible: fires to be done; corn and potatoes to be saved for next summer; children to be taught; and many other matters that ought to be done by me, if I was only there, run through my mind by day and by night. I trust in the Lord, however, that you will do all that is needed, and so I am reconciled to be patient till I return to my family post again.⁴³

His letters during this period also portray his love and concern for his wife and children. Again, he wrote:

I know the task of training up children right before the Lord, is too much for a woman, and was I not confident of your virtue and capability, I should feel very uneasy, but your piety and prudence is so well known to me, that I know you will do all in your power to gratify my feelings in bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: to be obedient, to be wise, to be good, and to be pure in heart.⁴⁴

Fruit-- here, is beginning to ripen. I have eaten a few peaches and apples, but give me the society of my wife and children and this before anything on earth. Away from the flaunting fashions! Away from the luxuries of life! Give me the knowledge and love of God, my meek and modest wife, our children, and the real Saint friends, and I shall have more wealth and joy on earth, more glory and intelligence in eternity, than Caesar in his greatness or Solomon in his splendor. . . .⁴⁵

⁴²The Improvement Era, Vol. 45, 1942, p. 529.

⁴³The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, op. cit., pp. 26-31.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵"Journal History," September 16, 1835.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, realizing the trials of Sister Phelps in taking care of the large family alone and in doing all the necessary work, wrote to her:

I consider in some degree how great a trial you must have in this separation, but I think I may safely say, that you may rest with a firm reliance that God will so order it that you may not be separated only but for a short season, and then your joy will be full and if faithful, he will return and teach you things that have been hid from the wise and prudent, . . .⁴⁶

In addition to his work at Kirtland, Brother Phelps was an active missionary among his own relatives.

A few months before leaving Kirtland to return home, W. W. Phelps had written to his wife: "Sally can rejoice that she has some of her own blood in the Church. I shall try hard to have all your brothers and sisters brought in . . ."⁴⁷

Following the dedication, he left Kirtland in April, 1836, and returned to his former location in Missouri, to resume his responsible calling as a member of the stake presidency and join his beloved family. Again, he was to be faced with turmoil and unrest which he and the other brethren would attempt to stamp out, but which, he in turn, became a party to and a victim of.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The Improvement Era, op. cit., p. 529.

⁴⁷ Phelps Letters, (No date), op. cit.

⁴⁸ Jensen, op. cit., p. 694.

CHAPTER V

SAD EXPERIENCES AT FAR WEST, MISSOURI

Oh the western world -- oh the western world --
What a goodly, pleasant land is there!
Like a comely queen, in her robes of green,
It shines the fairest of the fair.

--W. W. Phelps

Home Again

On April 9, 1836, W. W. Phelps, his son, Waterman, Bishop Partridge and others, left Kirtland for Missouri. On their arrival to that state, Brother Phelps resumed his duties as a member of the stake presidency, and assisted in directing the activities of the Church in Missouri. He also continued formulating and signing petitions and writing letters to Governor Daniel Dunklin of Missouri, pleading for the rights of the Saints, who had been expelled from their homes in Jackson County. Soon after his return home, however, the citizens of Clay County were demanding that the Saints leave their homes and evacuate the county.¹

As a consequence of the preceding events, President Phelps wrote to the Brethren in Kirtland, on June 2, 1836:

Since I returned home to Missouri, I have been out on two expeditions, examining the regions of the "Far West." Soon after our return, Bishop Partridge and myself passed from Liberty to the northwest corner of Clay county, and examined the mills and streams, and country around Mr. Smith's generally denominated "Yankee Smith." It is customary, you know, for the sake of provincialism, among nations, kindreds and people, to nick-name (people) by their religion, or province or ancestry; so that one can be distinguished by being an Israelite, a Canaanite, a Christian, a "Mormon," a Methodist, or a corn Cracker, or a mighty hunter, etc., according to fancy or favor.

¹Jensen, op. cit., p. 694.

From Mr. Smith's we proceeded north-easterly through some timber and some prairie to Plattsburg, the county seat for Clinton county, a "smart little town," containing from fifteen to twenty hewed log cabins, and a two-story court house, thirty-two feet square. This town is located on the west side of Horse and Smith's fork of the Little Platte, contiguous to the timber on these streams, twenty-five miles north of Liberty. The timber, mill, and water privileges may answer a very small population, but for a large population they would be nothing. There are three stores, and soon will be four. Clinton county is mostly prairie, with here and there a few fringes or spots of timber on the creeks that run into the Little Platte and Grand River.

From this town we made the best course we could to the waters of Grand River. We had a "sort of road" towards Busby Fork, then we had to contend with naked prairie, patches of scrubby timber, deep banked creeks and branches, together with a rainy morning, and no compass; but with the blessings of the Lord, we came to "some house" in the afternoon, and passed into Ray County. On Shoal creek, where there is water, there are some tolerable mill sites; but the prairies -- those old "clearings" peering one over another, as far as the eye can glance, flatten all common calculation as to timber for boards, rails, or future wants, for a thick population, according to the natural reasoning of men.

What the design of our Heavenly Father was, or is, as to these vast prairies of the Far West, I know no further than we have revelation. The Book of Mormon terms them, the land of desolation; and when I get into a prairie so large that I am out of sight of timber, just as a seaman is "out of the sight of land on the ocean," I have to exclaim -- What are man and his works, compared with the Almighty and His creations? Who hath viewed His everlasting fields? Who hath counted His buffaloes? Who hath seen all His deer on a thousand prairies? The pinks variegate these widespread lawns, without the hand of man to aid them, and the bees of a thousand groves banquet on the flowers, unobserved, and sip the honey-dews of heaven. Nearly every skirt of timber to the state line on the north, I am informed, has some one in it. The back settlers are generally very honorable, and more hospitable than any people I ever saw; you are, in most instances, welcome to the best they have.²

On June 29, 1836, a mass meeting was held in the Liberty court house where resolutions were passed with the objective of asking the Saints to leave Clay county. Thus, in the latter part of 1836, the majority of the Saints, including Brother Phelps and his family, left Clay

²

Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 444-45.

county and removed to the prairies, in what soon afterwards became Caldwell county, Missouri.³

It is interesting to note that a few years prior to this time, William Phelps had written to Oliver Cowdery, and in his prolific style, sketched the country often called the "Upper Missouri":

... situated in the borders of the vast prairies of the Great West. Very little difference is perceptible, in the upper counties of Missouri, in soil, productions, settlements, or society. If there be an exception, it must be in the position and soil of Jackson These counties, in general have a tolerable rich soil, composed of clay, fine sand, and black mold, especially upon the prairies. The cultivated produce consists chiefly of small quantities of wheat, large quantities of corn, some oats, hemp, cattle, horses, a few sheep, hogs, in scores, and a variety of vegetables, but not to any extent. -- Sweet potatoes, cotton, tobacco, and perhaps other plants, grow in fair seasons, very well.

The face of the country is somewhat rolling, though not hilly, and owing to the great depth of soil, the branches, or brooks, are worked out and present ugly ravines from ten to fifty feet deep; one of the great causes why the Missouri is ever rily. Every rain starts the mud.

Unlike the martial-like wildernesses of the timbered States, except upon rivers and water courses, which are striped and specked with a rather small than sturdy growth of trees, as far as the eye can glance, swell peeps over swell, and prairie lies beyond prairie, till the spectator can almost imagine himself in the midst of an ocean of meadows.

The timber is mostly a mixture of several kinds of oak, hickory, black walnut, elm, ash, cherry, honey locust, mulberry, cories bean, hack berry, bass wood, and box elder, with the addition upon the bottoms, of cotton wood, button wood, pecan, soft maple, with now and then a very small patch of sugar maple. The shrubbery, in part, is red bud, dog wood, hawthorn, many berry, hazel, gooseberry, summer and winter grapes, paupau, persimon, crabapple, etc.

The climate is mild and delightful nearly three quarters of the year; and, being situated about an equal distance from the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as well as from the Allegany and Rocky Mountains, in near 39 degrees of north latitude and between

³ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 413-422.

16 and 17 degrees of west longitude, it certainly affords the pleasing hope of becoming as good a spot as there will be on the globe, when the wolf shall lie down with the lamb. The coldest weather comes in December and January, with, hardly ever two day's sleighing; so that sleighs and bells are among the unmentionables of this great center of North America. February is not unfrequently a mild month, and March so much so, that potatoes planted the latter part of it, are sometimes digable the last of May. April though it has some frost, is the opening season for business, for gardens, for corn, and, in fact, for everything for summer crops, if you wish a good yield. The spring is often wet, and the summer warm and dry. The fall beautiful. As the October frosts change the green strength of summer into golden age, the Indians begin their fall hunt, and fire the prairies till the western world becomes so full of smoke, that, as it eventually spreads by the fall winds, for all I know, it makes the "smoky days," or "Indian summer," throughout the continent....

The wild game is an important link to the living of many in the west. In the inhabited sections, however, it grows "less plenty;" and where the hunter could once drop the huge buffalo, the surly bear, the stately elk, the sly beaver, and the proud swan, he can now find difficulty in bringing down the deer, the wolf, the fox, the turkey, the goose, the brandt, the duck, etc., while the squirrels, rabbits, racoons, and many other small animals sport as they please. Of the fish I will speak hereafter.

Besides some common birds to almost every State, the red finch, and the green bodied, gold headed parakeet, live and die as habitual settlers. The turkey buzzard, makes this clime his summer house, and goes to other warmer quarters before winter. The crow, the raven, and in mild winters the robin, stay here through cold weather, and mostly emigrate to the north with the return of spring.

The honey bee is a large stockholder in the flowers of the variegated prairies; so much so, that when they have not been used up by swarms of bee hunters, they yet form one great staple of the inland commerce of the west. Honey is frequently sold at 25 cents per whole sale, and 37 cents at retail, a gallon.

Among the serpents, the rattle snake, and the copper head are the worst, though not very plenty. That bird, whose image, if not worshipped, has more adorers in this nation than the Lord of glory, for it stands alike in the gold eagle, and silver dollar, and perches as gracefully on the soldier's cap as on the officer's hat, and appears larger upon the sign of a tavern than upon the seal of the United States, -- I mean the American eagle -- it is a commoner among the great ones of the west.

But lest I become irksome on too many things at once, let me turn to some of the advantages and disadvantages, which are natural to the land as it is. It is a great advantage to have land already cleared to your hands, as the prairies are; and there is no small disadvantage to lack timber for fencing, fuel, and buildings. Notwithstanding, there are many good springs of water, yet there is a want upon the prairies in some places, and, generally, water privileges for grist and saw mills, and carding machines and clothier's works are scarce. That patriotism, which results in good roads and bridges, labor-saving machines, and excellent mills, is yet dormant. I do not know of a clothier's works in the Upper or Lower country. It costs one fourth or one fifth of our grain to grind it. Run-round horse mills, or those on the inclined plane order, for horses and oxen, are all the dependence at present. There is a small stream saw and grist mill, of about ten horse power engine, in Clay; a steam saw mill at Lexington, and a flouring mill nearly finished, on the Little Blue, in Jackson. It may be supposed, in those States where negroes do the work, that they can saw boards with a whip saw, and drive team to grind in an animal power mill.

Let it be remembered that the most of the land is free from stones, even too much so, for excepting limestone, in some places, there are very few if any for use. But suffice it to be, that, with all the lacks and inconveniences, now extant, grain is raised so easy, that a man may live as well on three day's work in a week, here, as on six in some other distant places. It is not uncommon for wheat, when ripe, to be let to cut and thresh at the halt. Corn at 20 cents per bushel, and wheat at 40, are, however, the lowest selling prices latterly, and I conclude, that from the great quantity of corn and wheat, or flour, necessary to supply the garrison, it will never be lower. So much on things as they naturally are.

Now with all the country has, and all it has not, without willy inventions, let us reflect that God has made and prepared it for the use of his people, like all the rest of the world with good and bad to try them. Here are wanting many things to expedite ease and opulence. Here sickness comes, and where does it not? The ague and fever, the chill fever, a kind of cold plague, and other diseases, prey upon emigrants till they are thoroughly seasoned to the climate. Here death puts an end to life, and so it does all over the globe. Here the poor have to labor to procure a living, and so they do anywhere else. Here the saints suffer trials and tribulations, while the wicked enjoy the world and rejoice, and so it has been since Cain built a city for the ungodly to revel in.

But it is all right, and I thank God that it is so. The wicked enjoy this world and the saints the next

Founding of Far West

Before the exodus from Clay County was initiated, however, the site of Far West had been chosen by W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer, during the summer of 1836, as the main settlement in Caldwell county.

The north half of Far West was entered in the name of William W. Phelps and the south half in John Whitmer's name.⁵ Therefore, the task of selling the town lots, after the site had been surveyed, was given to Brother Phelps and Brother Whitmer, on April 7, 1837.⁶

As a result of this task, some misunderstandings arose on the part of the above two brethren. It seems that after President Thomas B. Marsh, president of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder Elisha Groves had turned over about fourteen hundred dollars to W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer to purchase the land, that:

These two brethren so presumed to act independently of the high council of the church in Missouri, and without consultation with others, that they seemed to be conducting matters with a high hand, also in their own interests -- for personal gain. They laid out the public square; they appointed and ordained a committee to supervise the building of a house unto the Lord -- a temple; and appropriated to themselves the profits arising from the sale of town lots, though from these profits it must be said for them, they made large donations or appropriations, \$1,000 each, to the house of the Lord in contemplation. It is very probable that no wrong was intended by these brethren, but acting as they did without consultation with the high council and other brethren equally interested in the upbuilding of Zion with them, and in utter disregard of the principle that "all things shall be done by common consent in the church, by much prayer and faith," naturally gave offense, and awakened suspicion of wrong intentions

⁵Roberts, op. cit., p. 423.

⁶Andrew Jensen, Church Chronology, (Salt Lake City, Utah, Deseret News Press, 1914), p. 13.

⁷Roberts, op. cit., p. 423.

On April 5, 1837, an investigation was held by the high council and Apostles Thomas B. Marsh and David Patton were in charge. An agreement was made, whereas, the town site and other lands entered by Brothers Phelps and Whitmer, plus the profits arising from the sale of lands, were turned over to Bishop Partridge. Also, they were released from paying their subscriptions of \$1,000 each, for the House of the Lord, which they intended to pay out of the money they had collected.⁸

Contemporary with the troubles from misunderstanding, the site of Far West was fast becoming a going concern. Brother Phelps writes that:

Monday, the 3rd of July, was a great and glorious day in Far West; more than fifteen hundred Saints assembled at this place and at half past eight in the morning, after prayer, singing, and an address, they proceeded to break the ground for the Lord's House. The day was beautiful; the Spirit of the Lord was with us. An excavation for this great edifice, one hundred and ten feet long by eighty feet broad was nearly finished. Tuesday, the 4th, we had a large meeting, and several of the Missourians were baptized. Our meetings, held in the open prairie, were larger than they were in Kirtland, when I was there. We have more or less to bless, confirm, and baptize every Sabbath. This same day, our school section was sold at auction, and although entirely a prairie, it brought, on a year's credit, from \$3.50 to \$10.20 per acre, making our first school fund five thousand and seventy dollars. Land cannot be had around town now much less than ten dollars per acre.

Our numbers increase daily, and notwithstanding the season has been cold and backward no one has lacked a meal or went hungry. . . . Our town gains some, we have about one hundred buildings, eight of which are stores. If the brethren abroad are wise and will come on with the means and help enter the land and populate the county and build the Lord's House, we shall soon have one of the most precious spots on the globe; God grant that it may be so. Of late we receive little news from you, and we think much of that is exaggerated.

As ever,
/s/ W. W. Phelps

⁸ Far West Record (Ms.), pp. 72-73, as quoted in History of the Church, Vol. II, p. 483-84.

N. B. -- Please say in your Messenger and Advocate "A post office has been established at Far West, Caldwell county, Missouri."⁹

On May 27, 1837, W. W. Phelps was appointed postmaster at Far West. On July 4, he executed the necessary bonds for the faithful discharge of his duties as postmaster, and he was duly commissioned as postmaster August 26, 1837, his commission being signed by Anos Kendall, at Washington, D. C.¹⁰

During this time, the versatile Phelps had also been appointed and commissioned as "a justice of the county court for the county of Caldwell." This commission was signed by none other than the new Governor Lilburn W. Boggs.¹¹

The Prophet Joseph Smith visited the Saints at Far West, arriving there about November 1, 1837. The Lord had already informed the Prophet Joseph, while still in Kirtland, of the transgression of W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer. In a revelation given at Kirtland, Ohio, the following was given:

Verily thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph -- my servants John Whitmer and William W. Phelps have done those things which are not pleasing in my sight, therefore if they repent not they shall be removed from their places. Amen.¹²

Therefore, on November 7, an important meeting was held where both Elders Phelps and Whitmer made "explanations and confession of error." As a consequence, they were allowed to continue and were sustained in

⁹Smith, op. cit., pp. 496-97.

¹⁰"Journal History," May 27, 1837.

¹¹Ibid., February 4, 1837.

¹²Smith, op. cit., p. 511.

their positions as the presidency at Far West. The Prophet returned to Kirtland later that same month.¹³

Apostasy at Far West

The preceding events represented only the lull before the storm, however, as more serious errors were soon to be charged against William Wines Phelps and others.

At this point it must be noted that after the return of Zion's Camp to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835, all hope of immediate return of the Saints to Jackson county, was abandoned. However, the general feeling of the Church membership was as follows:

To sell our land would amount to a denial of our faith, as that land is the place where the Zion of God shall stand, according to our faith and belief in the revelations of God, and upon which Israel will be gathered, according to the prophets.¹⁴

That such feelings were correct, is evident from a letter written by the Prophet Joseph Smith as early as December 6, 1833. He wrote:

You will recollect that the Lord has said, that Zion should not be removed out of her place; therefore the land should not be sold, but be held by the Saints, until the Lord in His wisdom shall open a way for your return; and until that time, if you can purchase a tract of land in Clay county for present emergencies, it is right you should do so, if you can do it, and not sell your land in Jackson county. It is not safe for us to send you a written revelation on the subject, but what is stated above is according to wisdom. . . .¹⁵

¹³Jensen, Church Chronology, p. 13.

¹⁴Roberts, op. cit., p. 430.

¹⁵Joseph Smith, op. cit., p. 451.

*At this meeting Elder Lyman Wight stated that he considered all other accusations of minor importance compared to Brother Phelps and Whitmer selling their lands in Jackson county; that they had set an example which all the Saints were liable to follow. He said that it was a hellish principle on which they had acted, and that they had flatly denied the faith in so doing. -- Ibid., p. 4.

Among those who did not hold this view were W. W. Phelps, the Whitmers, and Oliver Cowdery. As a result of their conduct, these men who comprised the presidency of the Church in Missouri, were arraigned before a general assembly of the Saints on February 4, 1838. They were charged with selling their lands in Jackson county, contrary to the revelations of the Lord, in addition to claiming money which really belonged to the Church.* Consequently, the members of the assembly withdrew the hand of fellowship from their presiding officers. Similar action was taken later, in Carter's settlement, Durphy's home, and Haun's Mill.¹⁶

The accused brethren refused to appear before the high council on the ground that the meeting was illegal, being composed of men who were prejudiced against them. They wrote the following letter at Far West, dated March 10, 1838.

Sir---It is contrary to the principles of the revelations of Jesus Christ and His gospel, and the laws of the land, to try a person for an offense by an illegal tribunal, or by men prejudiced against him, or by authority that has given an opinion or decision beforehand, or in his absence.**

Very respectfully we have the honor to be,

/s/ David Whitmer

William W. Phelps

John Whitmer

Presidents of the Church of Christ in Missouri¹⁷

*. . . also remarks by Presidents Marsh and Patten, setting forth the iniquity of those men in claiming the \$2,000 spoken of, which did not belong to them, any more than to any other person in the Church
Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶ Joseph F. Smith, Essentials in Church History (Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1953), p. 206.

¹⁷ Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 7.

**The question raised here several times by the brethren, concerning the illegality of the council attempting then to try the local Presidency of the Church in Missouri, grew out of a misapprehension of a council provided for in the revelations of God for the trial of a President of the High Priesthood, who is also of the Presidency of the whole

The letter was delivered to the council, completely ignoring the action of the Saints, who had rejected them as a presidency.¹⁸

This communication was the straw that broke the camel's back.

The effect the letter had on the council was to:

. . . convince them still more of their wickedness by endeavoring to palm themselves off upon the Church, as her Presidents, after the Church had by a united voice, removed them from their presidential office, for their ungodly conduct; and the letter was considered no more nor less than a direct insult or contempt cast upon the authorities of God, and the Church of Jesus Christ.¹⁹

As a result of the charges against W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer, it was decided by the council, on March 10, 1838, that they "be no longer members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."²⁰

The Fruits of Apostasy

In the year 1838, the Saints prospered in all their endeavors; the Church was constantly growing in membership, as hundreds of families were emigrating to Missouri from various parts of the United States and Canada. During the month of March, the Prophet Joseph arrived with his family. Soon afterwards, President Sidney Rigdon arrived with his family.²¹

Church. The said revelation provides that if a President of the High Priesthood, shall transgress, he shall be brought before the Presiding Bishop, or bishopric, of the Church, who are to be assisted by twelve counselors chosen from the High Priesthood. Here the President's conduct may be investigated, and the decision of that council upon his head is to be the end of controversy concerning him. But the Presidency of the Church in Missouri was a local presidency, hence they could not plead the illegality of a local council of the Church to try them.--Joseph Smith, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁸ Roberts, op. cit., p. 431.

¹⁹ Joseph Smith, op. cit., p. 7.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

²¹ Times and Seasons, April, 1840, Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 15.

At this same time, W. W. Phelps and others who had been "cut off" were busy in striving to stir up strife and turmoil among the brethren, and urging on mean and vexatious lawsuits. They were also studiously engaged in circulating false and slanderous reports against the Saints.²²

Thus, during the month of June, Sidney Rigdon, (following his famous "Salt Sermon,"*) wrote a long article against these "dissenters," warning them to "cease their trouble-making and get out of the Mormon communities, if they were interested in their own safety." This document was signed by eighty-four Mormons, of which the following is a brief outline:

Greetings:

Whereas the citizens of Caldwell county have borne with the abuse received from you, at different times . . . having exhausted all the patience they have and conceive that to bear any longer is a vice instead of a virtue: . . . we will neither bear nor suffer any longer; . . . neither think, gentlemen, that in so saying we are trifling . . . for we are not . . . no threats from you . . . out of the county you shall go . . . you shall have three days after you receive this communication to depart with your families . . . if you do not depart we will use the means in our power to cause you to depart; for go you shall . . . There is but one decree for you, which is depart, depart, or else a more fatal calamity shall befall you. After Oliver Cowdery had been taken by a State's warrant for stealing, and the stolen property found concealed in the house of W. W. Phelps, in which nefarious transaction John Whitmer had

²²Ibid.

*Daryl Chase writes: "So far as I have been able to discover, this sermon was never written, but both Mormons and anti-Mormons who have referred to it agree that even in a county where practically all were agreed politically and religiously, it was an insane utterance. If the various references to it are reliable, Rigdon seems to have likened the dissenters unto the savorless salt and suggested that they should be stamped out and trodden under feet of men. Some of the anti-Mormons have maintained that he told his listeners that the real saints should literally trample on the dissenters until their bowels gushed out; . . . But this much is certain: 'Sidney's Salt Sermon' was inflammatory and threatening. Neither his friends nor his enemies ever forgot the general sentiments which he expressed on that occasion." --Chase, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

also participated. Oliver Cowdery stole the property, conveyed it to John Whitmer, and John Whitmer to William W. Phelps, and there the officers of the law found it . . . Did you practice the promised reformation? You know you did not . . . Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Lyman E. Johnson, united with a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, and black-legs of the deepest dye, to deceive, cheat, and defraud the Saints out of their personal property, by every art and stratagem which wickedness could invent . . . and actually made attempts with their gang to bring mobs upon us. . . . In addition to this you have also stirred up men of weak minds to prosecute one another for the vile purpose of getting a fee for a pettifogger from them . . . and to crown the whole, you have had the audacity to threaten us, that if we offered to molest you, you would get up a mob from Clay and Ray counties. For this insult, if nothing else, and your threatening to shoot us, if we offered to disturb you, we will put you from the county of Caldwell -- so help us God!²³

As a consequence of the foregoing document, W. W. Phelps and the others, late one afternoon in June, hurriedly left their homes. Although these men were undoubtedly a "disturbing element," their fellow citizens were not justified in taking the law into their own hands and with "threats of vengeance" drive them from Far West.²⁴

Following this hasty exodus, it is evident that William Phelps returned to his home to resume his official duties for the State, as is indicated by his subsequent activities at Far West.

During these times of "stress and strain" it is significant that the Lord still reached out after Brother Phelps and Frederick G. Williams; knowing that they were still good men. The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation, on July 8, 1838, making known their duty at this time.

Verily, thus saith the Lord, in consequence of their transgressions their former standing has been taken away from them, and now, if they will be saved, let them be ordained as Elders

²³Chase, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

²⁴Roberts, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 439.

in my Church to preach my Gospel and travel abroad from land to land and from place to place, to gather mine elect unto me, saith the Lord, and let this be their labors from henceforth.²⁵

As a result of this invitation, Frederick G. Williams was willing to be rebaptized and was restored to complete fellowship with the Saints. However, Brother Phelps did not avail himself of this timely opportunity.²⁶

In addition to the foregoing effort to reach Brother Phelps, he was called to a meeting of the presidency, high council, and bishop's court at Far West for the purpose of locating the county seat at Far West. During this meeting, Brother Phelps was "requested to draw up a petition to locate the county seat at Far West." At this time, however, Brother Phelps did not display the true spirit of repentance and was soon to completely apostatize from the cause that he had loved and had so ardently supported.²⁷

Contemporary events in the life of W. W. Phelps at this time were of a serious nature. The extermination order of Governor Boggs had been issued, and as a result, a general state of war existed with the army encamped outside of Far West. The army would permit no person to go out or come in the city, and those who attempted it were shot at. In an effort to secure a truce, Colonel Hinkle sought an interview with General

²⁵ Smith, op. cit., p. 46.

²⁶ Roberts, op. cit., p. 444.

²⁷ Joseph F. Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation (Vol. II, Published by the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), p. 99.

Lucas, to learn if some compromise could not be arranged to avoid a battle. When the interview was held, Colonel Hinkle was accompanied by W. W. Phelps, and John Corrill, who, within the past few weeks, had also become disaffected towards the Church. At this time, the following propositions were presented to Colonel Hinkle for acceptance in behalf of the "Mormons":

1. To give up their leaders to be tried and punished.
2. To make an appropriation of their property, all who had taken up arms, to the payment of their debts and indemnity for damage done by them.
3. That the balance should leave the state, and be protected out by the militia, but to be permitted to remain under protection until further orders were received from the Commander-in-Chief.
4. To give up the arms of every description, to be receipted for.²⁸

However, Colonel Hinkle performed a treacherous act when he returned and reported to Joseph Smith "that the officers of the militia desired an appointment with the brethren, hoping that the difficulties might be settled without carrying out the exterminating order."²⁹ As a consequence of this performance, Colonel Hinkle was charged with the betrayal of Joseph Smith and others.

At a later date, in an attempt to vindicate himself from the charges at Far West, Hinkle wrote an interesting letter to W. W. Phelps, which in part read:

After so long a time, I take up my pen to address a few lines to you, and thus break that perfect silence which has existed between us ever since we parted in Far West, Missouri, in the fall of 1838; then you and I were both dissenters from the church of Latter-day Saints; though we did not dissent upon exactly the same principles -- for I only dissented from the unwise, unhallowed management of the heads or authorities of the church, and not from any true points of doctrine which I

²⁸

Smith, Essentials in Church History, op. cit., p. 238.

²⁹

Ibid., p. 240.

ever had believed, but you said to me that you dissented from the whole Mormon system.

. . . that I, as a base wretch, after having the confidence of the church -- yet in that critical moment in the perils in Missouri, when they in and of Far West were besieged by between three and four thousand men -- the story is, that I, then and there, betrayed 'the Heads of the Church' into the hands of the Military authorities of Missouri, and that too, for a large sum of money! And then, as if they intended to heap disgrace upon me, after insult and injury, they say I turned state's evidence against them: -- also, that I informed on many of the citizens of Far West, had them arrested and delivered up to the court of inquiry, . . .

Now Sir, you are the man who knows more about it than any other man belonging to your church. You know that you, John Corrill, A. Morrison, and myself, were appointed by Joseph Smith to go and confer with the commanding officers of the Missouri Militia, and effect a treaty if possible, on any terms short of a battle. You know that we went and risked our lives with a white flag, when only a few hours previous, the bearer of one (Charles Rich), had been fired at on the same field; and we did this to obey the order or request of Joseph Smith

. . . . Now Sir, as you are the man who was engaged in the whole affair with me, I request that you write a letter for publication, and either put it in the Times and Seasons or send it to me; and in it exempt me from those charges, and correct the minds of that people and the public on this subject -- for you know that they are as base as the blackness of darkness, and as false as Satan himself.³⁰

Following the betrayal of the Prophet Joseph and the other brethren, a court of inquiry was held at Richmond, Missouri, on November, 1838. Thus, when Judge Austin King began collecting evidence against the "Mormon leaders," W. W. Phelps signed his name to a most damaging affidavit against Sidney Rigdon and the Prophet. Among other things, he testified:

William W. Phelps, a witness on the part of the State, produced, sworn, and examined, deposes and saith: That, as early as April last a meeting in Far West of eight or twelve

³⁰ Messenger and Advocate, August, 1845, Vol. 1: Pittsburgh: E. Robinson, Publisher, p. 297. (The Rigdon Publication)

persons, Mr. Rigdon arose, and made an address to them, in which he spoke of having borne persecutions and law-suits, and other privations and did not intend to bear them any longer; that they meant to resist the law, and if a sheriff came after them with writs, they would kill him; and if any body opposed them, they would take off their heads. George W. Harris, who was present, observed, You mean the head of their influence, I suppose? Rigdon answered, he meant that lump of flesh and bones called the skull, or scalp. Joseph Smith, Jr., followed Mr. Rigdon, approving his sentiments, and said that was what they intended to do. Both, in their remarks observed, that they meant to have the words of the presidency to be as good and undisputed as the words of God; and that no one should speak against what they said. Hyrum Smith was not in Far West at this time, and I think he was not in the country. Some time in June, steps were taken to get myself and others out of the county of Caldwell, and efforts were made to get the Post Office from me (being Post Master), by a demand for it. I explained the law, which I then informed the second presidency of the church, by letter, that I was willing to do any thing that was right, and if I had wronged any man, I would make satisfaction. I was then notified to attend a meeting. Sidney Rigdon, in an address, again brought up the subject of the post office. I told them if public opinion said I should give it up, I would do so, but they would have to await the decision of the Postmaster General; which they agreed to do, with the understanding that a committee of three should inspect the letters written and sent by me, as well as those received by me. This committee, however, never made their appearance Shortly after that I was at another meeting, where they were trying several -- the first presidency being present, Sidney Rigdon was their chief spokesman. The object of the meeting seemed to be to make persons confess, and repent of their sins to God and the presidency; and arraigned them for giving false accounts of their money and effects they had on hand; and they said, whenever they found one guilty of these things, they were to be handed over, as they said. I yet did not know what was meant by this expression, "the brother of Gideon." Not a great while after this, secret and private meetings were held; I endeavored to find out what they were; and I learned from John Corrill and others, that they were forming a secret society called Danites, formerly called the Brother of Gideon. In the meeting above referred to, in which I was present, one man arose to defend himself and he was ordered to leave the house, but commenced to speak; Avaré then said, "Where are my ten men?" Thirty or more men arose up; whereupon the man said he would leave the house. At this meeting I agreed to conform to the rules of the church in all things, knowing I had a good deal of property in the county, and if I went off I should be obliged to leave it. For some time before and after this meeting an armed guard was kept in town and one of them at my house, during the night, as I supposed, to watch my person. In the forepart of July, I being one of the justices of the

county court, was forbid by Joseph Smith, Jr., from issuing any process against him

. . . I remained in the camps one day and two nights at Dialmon, when, returned to Far West. The night before I started to Far West, an express was sent from Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight's to Rigdon at Far West; but what was the contents of the express I know not. When I returned to Far West, I had a message in reference to having wood and provisions provided for the families of those persons in Far West who were in Daviess; and for the purpose of giving that information I was invited to a school house, where I was admitted. The men being paraded before the door when I arrived numbered about 40 or 50. It was remarked that these were true men; and we all marched into the house. A guard was placed around the house, and one at the door.

Mr. Rigdon then commenced making covenants, with uplifted hands. The first was that if any man attempted to move out of the county, or pack their things for that purpose, that any man then in the house, seeing this without saying anything to any other person, should kill him, and haul him aside into the brush, and that all the burial he should have be in a turkey buzzard's guts, so that nothing should be left but his bones. That measure was carried in the form of a covenant, with uplifted hands. After the vote had passed, he said, "Now see if any one dare vote against it," and called for the negative vote and there was none. The next covenant, that if any person from the surrounding county came into their town, walking about -- no odds who he might be -- any one of that meeting should kill him, and throw him aside into the brush. This passed in a manner as the above had passed. The third covenant was to conceal all things. Mr. Rigdon, then observed that the kingdom of heaven had no secrets; that yesterday a man had slipped his wind, and was dragged into the hazel brush, and said he "the man who lisps it shall die."³¹

³¹ Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc., News Clippings, Brigham Young University, 1844, Vol. 2, pp. 331-33, 336-37.

*Later, W. W. Phelps made the sworn statement: . . . that the statements purporting to be his testimony against Joseph Smith, and others, as taken before some great Court in Missouri, is a sham; no legal court was held there, and the thing that was fixed, was guarded by mob soldiers; and the witnesses examined amid the firing of cannon, threats, imprecations and vengeance of said mob; continually echoing the diabolical power of said mock-tribunal, or inquisition; that there was no law for a Mormon in Missouri; that in such horrid duress your affiant used prudence to save his life, having saved it thrice before by a power above Missouri; wherefore the statement written by Missourians, sanctioned by Missourians; published by Missourians, and swallowed by apostates, is a hoax just fit for mean men.--Harvey Neighbor, June 12, 1844, Vol. 2, No. 111, p. 255.

Indeed, it was this testimony which was most effective in holding Joseph and others to investigation before grand juries. When W. W. Phelps issued this sworn statement, that there had been a "band called the "Daughter of Zion" (afterwards called the "Danite Band"), which was formed by the members of the Mormon Church, whose original object was to drive from the county of Caldwell all those who dissented from the Mormon Church, he supported a falsehood that was to help send a man whom he loved; a man whom he had lived intimately with; and above all, a man whom he knew was a prophet of the living God, to a filthy prison for one of the most trying times of his life.³²

Thus, W. W. Phelps was finally excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at a conference held in Quincy, Illinois, March 17, 1839.³³

³² Roberts, op. cit., p. 500.

³³ Andrew Jensen, IDS Biographical Encyclopedia (Vol. III, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1920), p. 695.

CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Holy, holy is the Lord
Precious, precious is His word;
Repent and live;
Though your sins be crimson red,
Oh! repent, and He'll forgive.

-- W. W. Phelps

The Move to Dayton, Ohio

A few months following his excommunication, W. W. Phelps wrote to John P. Greene, on April 23, 1839:

Sir:-- The summit end of Mr. Benson's mill-dam was carried away by the late freshet, and, unless repaired, it will all go the next.

The committee have gone, and if Father Smith would send me the power of attorney, in connection with Mr. Benson's and Corrill's I have a chance to sell it before it is all lost. Maybe I might save the old gentleman something, which I promised Hyrum I would do if possible, because they have now need. Will you have them do so?

/s/ W. W. Phelps

To John P. Greene, Quincy, Illinois¹

However, when he received an answer to this letter, it was signed by the Prophet Joseph Smith, who, following his escape from Liberty prison, had made his way to Commerce, Illinois. Joseph wrote:

Sir:-- In answer to yours of the 23rd of April, to John P. Greene, we have to say that we shall feel obliged by your not making yourself officious concerning any part of our business in the future. We shall be glad if you can make a living by minding your own affairs; and we desire (so far as you are concerned) to be left to manage ours as well as we can. We would much rather lose our properties than to be molested by such interference; and as we consider that we have already

¹Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 334.

experienced much over-officiousness at your hands, concerning men and things pertaining to our concerns, we now request once and for all, that you will avoid all interference in our business or affairs from this time henceforth and forever. Amen.

/s/ Joseph Smith, Jun.²

Although the answer seems stern and harsh, it will be remembered that "W. W. Phelps was among the most bitter enemies of the Prophet; . . . who testified against him before Judge Austin A. King."³

During the following months, W. W. Phelps and his family had the misfortune of contacting a serious sickness. Brother Phelps suffered from "several disorders," accompanied with the "chills and fever". His wife had the "Billons" fever; his son, Waterman had the "fever", Ague, and inflammatory dysentary"; and Sarah had "two or three diseases, plus the chills and fever."⁴

As soon as they were somewhat recovered from their sickness they moved eastward, making a hasty departure from Far West and arriving in Dayton, Ohio, in the early part of 1840.⁵ In explaining this sudden removal from Far West to Dayton, he wrote to John Whitmer, his fellow apostate, on March 4, 1840, as follows:

You say nothing of what your intentions for the future are, or where you intend to locate: -- I should like to know; but perhaps you may judge for the course I took, that it is best to go, and tell where you are afterwards

As to the debts we contracted, I have ever done and meant to do my part. My house and lot, and some small parcels around town, after paying Mr. Boyce the post office deficit,* I want

²Ibid., pp. 358-59.

³Ibid., p. 359.

⁴Unpublished material, (letter given to writer from Professor Wilford Poulson) written from Bellbrooke, Ohio, March 4, 1840. ⁵Ibid.

*He acted as postmaster until Aug. 6, 1838, when he resigned and Sidney Rigdon replaced him.--Jensen, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 694.

sold to apply on those concerns: The printing office and lot I will deed to you as soon as I can get to some place where I can tarry long enough to do the business. The whole matter shall be arranged as speedily as possible. It would have been arranged on my part last summer with Frye, but sickness prevented, and I barely escaped to a healthier climate by the threads of life, which held soul and body together for the time being. I am in great need now and mean to realize some money besides cancelling the old debts in Missouri from the avails of those lands there.⁶

Soon after their arrival in Dayton, recovering from their long illness, in poverty, and without money, W. W. Phelps traveled north to Ballbrooke, Ohio, in search of a place suitable to rest and settle down until he could "realize some money." Evidently he did not find a place to his satisfaction, as he wrote in his letter to Whitmer, "I am about to start east in quest of a home where we can rest a while -- as soon as we can move I shall write to you."⁷

Back Into the Fold

Before the move east was accomplished, however, W. W. Phelps met Elders Orson Hyde and John E. Page, who were on their way to dedicate the land of Palestine, and were at this time engaged in missionary work at Dayton.⁸ After a lengthy discussion with these men, W. W. Phelps informed them in great sorrow and a repentant spirit that "he wanted to live." They advised Brother Phelps to write to the Prophet Joseph at Commerce, Illinois, which he did on June 20, 1840. At this time he requested Brothers Hyde and Page to add a few lines to his letter, from which the following is quoted:

⁶Letter from Prof. Poulson, op. cit.

⁷Ibid.

⁸

Times and Seasons, Vol. 2, No. 7, February 1, 1841, p. 334.

. . . . Brother Phelps says he wants to live, but we do not feel ourselves authorized to act upon his case, but have recommended him to you; but he says his poverty will not allow him to visit you in person at this time, and we think he tells the truth. We therefore, advise him to write, which he has done.

He tells us verbally that he is willing to make any sacrifice to procure your fellowship, life not expected, yet reposing that confidence in your magnanimity that you will take no advantage of this open and frank confession. If he can obtain your fellowship he wants to come to Commerce as soon as he can. But if he cannot be received into the fellowship of the Church, he must do the best he can in banishment and exile.

Brethren, with you are the keys of the Kingdom; to you is power given to "exert your clemency, or display your vengeance." By the former you will save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins; by the latter, you will forever discourage a returning prodigal, cause sorrow without benefit, pain without pleasure, (and the) ending (of Brother Phelps) in wretchedness and despair. But former experience teaches (us) that you are workmen in the art of saving souls; therefore, with greater confidence do we recommend to your clemency and favorable consideration, the author (of the foregoing) and subject of this communication. "Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely." Brother Phelps says he will, and so far we are concerned we say he may.⁹

Nowhere in Latter-day Saint Church literature can there be found a more sublime example of the spirit of repentance and forgiveness than in the following exchange of letters between W. W. Phelps and Joseph Smith.

Brother Joseph:-- I am alive, and with the help of God I mean to live still. I am as the prodigal son, though I never doubt or disbelieve the fulness of the Gospel. I have been greatly abused and humbled, and I blessed the God of Israel when I lately read your prophetic blessing on my head, as follows:

"The Lord will chasten him because he taketh honor to himself, and when his soul is greatly humbled he will forsake the evil. Then shall the light of the Lord break upon him as at noonday and in him shall be no darkness," etc.*

⁹Smith, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 142-43.

*This alludes to a blessing he received at the hands of Joseph Smith on September 22, 1835, while in Kirtland, Ohio. The Prophet said, "Blessed of the Lord is Brother Phelps, for he shall have the desires of his heart in the gift that pertain to writing the law of God, and in being an instrument in assisting to lift up an ensign to the nations. . . ."

I have seen the folly of my way, and I tremble at the gulf I have passed. So it is, and why I know not. I prayed and God answered, but what could I do? Says I, "I will repent and live, and ask my old brethren to forgive me, and though they chasten me to death, yet I will die with them, for their God is my God. The least place with them is enough for me, yea, it is bigger and better than all Babylon." Then I dreamed that I was in a large house with many mansions with you and Hyrum and Sidney, and when it was said, "Supper must be ready," by one of the cooks, I saw no meat, but you said there was plenty, and you showed me much, and as good as I ever saw; and while cutting to cook, your heart and mine beat within us, and we took each other's hand and cried for joy, and I awoke and took courage.

I know my situation, you know it, and God knows it, and I want to be saved if my friends will help me. Like the captain that was cast away on a desert island; when he got off he went to sea again, and made his fortune the next time, so let my lot be. I have done wrong and I am sorry. The beam is in my own eye. I have not walked along with my friends according to my holy anointing. I ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ of all the Saints, for I will do right, God helping me. I want your fellowship; if you cannot grant that, grant me your peace and friendship, for we are brethren, and our communion used to be sweet, and whenever the Lord brings us together again, I will make all the satisfaction on every point that Saints or God can require. Amen.¹⁰

/s/ W. W. Phelps

Naucoo, Hancock County, Illinois, July 22, 1840

Dear Brother Phelps:-- I must say that it is with no ordinary feelings I endeavor to write a few lines to you in answer to yours of the 29th ultimo; at the same time I am rejoiced at the privilege granted me.

You may in some measure realize what my feelings, as well as Elder Rigdon's and Brother Hyrum's are, when we read your letter -- truly our hearts were melted into tenderness and compassion when we ascertained your resolves, etc. I can assure you I feel a disposition to act on your case in a manner that will meet the approbation of Jehovah (whose servant I am) and agreeable to the principles of truth and righteousness which have been revealed; and inasmuch as long-suffering, patience,

The Lord will chasten him because he taketh honor to himself, and when his soul is greatly troubled he will forsake the evil, then shall the light of the Lord break upon him as at noon day, and in him shall be no darkness, so great is the glory that shall come upon him"--Patriarchal blessing, microfilm¹⁰ed at Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City.

Smith, op. cit., pp. 141-42.

and mercy have ever characterized the dealings of our Heavenly Father towards the humble and penitent, I feel disposed to copy the example, cherish the same principles, and by so doing be a savior of my fellowmen.

It is true, that we have suffered much in consequence of your behavior -- the cup of gall, already full enough for mortals to drink, was indeed filled to overflowing when you turned against us. One with whom we had oft taken sweet counsel together, and enjoyed many refreshing seasons from the Lord -- "had it been an enemy, we could have borne it." "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day when strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon (Far West), even thou wast as one of them; but thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger, neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress."

However, the cup has been drunk, the will of our Father has been done, and we are yet alive, for which we thank the Lord. And having been delivered from the hands of wicked men by the mercy of our God, we say it is your privilege to be delivered from the powers of the adversary, be brought into the liberty of God's dear children, and again take your stand among the Saints of the Most High, and by diligence, humility, and love unfeigned, commend yourself to our God, and your God, and to the branch of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Believing your confession to be real, and your repentance genuine, I shall be happy once again to give you the right hand of fellowship, and rejoice over the returning prodigal.

Your letter was read to the Saints last Sunday, and an expression of their feeling was taken, when it was unanimously resolved, that W. W. Phelps should be received into fellowship.

"Come on, dear brother, since the war is past,
For friends at first, are friends again at last."

Yours as ever,
/s/ Joseph Smith, Jun. 11*

¹¹
Ibid., pp. 162-64.

*When the great offense of Elder William W. Phelps is taken into account--amounting as it did to a betrayal of the Prophet and the Church in Missouri, during the troubles of the Saints in that state--this letter is remarkable. The Prophet's frank forgiveness of his erring brother, gently chiding his wrong-doing, but at the same time remembering in a large way that brother's former devotion and labors; the Prophet's willingness to have the prodigal return and occupy his former high standing among the

After the Prophet received Brother Phelps' letter, the Times and Seasons reported:

We are favored in this number with a lengthy communication from our beloved Brother W. W. Phelps, who has in former times written much upon the subject of the latter-day work, which is now in lively operation, and upon various subjects, to the great satisfaction of all those who have been conversant with the production of his pen. Some, who are acquainted with the scenes of the west in the time of our deepest distress and affliction, and are unacquainted with the restoration of Elder Phelps, it may seem somewhat strange to find this our beloved brother in fellowship with the Saints, and once more wielding his pen in the cause of truth, but the following letter will remove every obstacle: it was read to the Saints in this place and acted upon soon after it came to hand, and with one voice and uplifted hands they received brother Phelps into fellowship -- men are not perfect -- Peter denied the Lord in the time of peril, and yet the Lord was ready and willing to forgive, and Peter afterward wrought a great work.¹²

New Assignments

One of the first assignments upon re-entering the Church was to represent the Times and Seasons as an agent at Dayton. Don Carlos Smith, the editor of the Times and Seasons, in a prophetic tone, wrote:

We believe that Elder Phelps has a great work yet to do, and let the Saints hold him up by the prayer of faith, and help him do it. We hope Elder Phelps will continue to contribute his favors and they shall have a place in our little sheet.¹³

His talent as a write is again evident, from the "productions of his pen," when he submitted an article on prayer to the Times and Seasons from which the following extracts are quoted:

Saints -- all this exhibits a broad-mindedness and generosity that can come only from a great soul, influenced by the spirit of charity enjoined upon his disciples by the teachings of the Son of God. One of the surest evidences of Joseph Smith's greatness of mind and of the inspiration of God upon him is to be seen in his treatment of those who had fallen but were willing to and did repent of their sins. His capacity to forgive under these circumstances seemed boundless." -- Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 162-63.

¹²

Times and Seasons, loc. cit., Vol. 2, No. 7, Feb. 1, 1841, p.334.

¹³Ibid.

Prayer is the sacred coin of heart which buys blessings, and should be offered freely to God twice, if not thrice, a day in public and private; at home and abroad; on the land and the sea; in sickness and in health.

If God is the same yesterday, today and forever, what excuse can a saint offer for neglecting this everlasting duty? . . . pray and live: God hears prayer. . . . If God is God let us worship him according to his pattern. For the sake of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, Godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, and eternal life, from henceforth, let us thank the Lord for what we enjoy, and ask him for what we need: it is life, pray for it. If wisdom, pray for it: yea, whatever thing is needed, pray for it, remembering the promise of the revelation, that, "all victory and glory is brought to pass unto you, through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith."

Once for all, brethren, let us say, that there is no perfume on earth more delightful, nor no essence in heaven more precious, than the golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.¹⁴

Upon reading about the death of Bishop Partridge, he also wrote:

The death of Brother Edward Partridge . . . struck me with deep solemnity. Since 1831 we had passed through many trying scenes, and he ever proved himself a faithful friend He lived Godly in Christ Jesus, and suffered persecution. As a Bishop he was one of the Lord's great men, and few will be able to wear his mantle with such simple dignity. He was an honest man, and I loved him.

Lord, thine anointed was a just man, and precious in thy sight, was his death! His name will be had in everlasting remembrance, while his enemies will be struck out of existence: so let me say:--

Our Father in heaven, whom all saints rely on,
Exalt ye to glory the Bishop of Zion,
As an heir to dominion, and power and might;
The called and chosen, and faithful, is worthy
To rise from a Saint to an angel of light.¹⁵

Leaving Dayton, W. W. Phelps moved to Kirtland, Ohio, where he was appointed clerk at a general conference of the Church on May 22nd,

¹⁴Times and Seasons, Vol. 2, No. 16, May, 1841, p. 451.

¹⁵Ibid., Vol. 1, No. 12, October, 1840, p. 71.

1841.¹⁶

On Sunday, May 23, 1841, he gave a talk on baptism for the dead, bringing scripture upon scripture to prove the consistency of this doctrine, as among the economy of God and powers of salvation.

After finishing the business of the elders quorum during the conference, it was resolved unanimously, that inasmuch as W. W. Phelps had been received into standing and fellowship by the church at Nauvoo, Illinois, that he should also be received into the same standing and fellowship, according to his "anointing" by the church at Kirtland.¹⁷

Also at this conference, Brother Phelps was appointed as a missionary to visit the several branches of the Church in Ohio and other states in the east.¹⁸

Following this appointment, he was given a letter of recommendation, whereas he immediately started for the east. This mission was, undoubtedly, one of the choicest experiences in the life of William Wines Phelps, and is best described in a letter to his wife, Sally, which he wrote on June 21, 1841, shortly after he arrived at the home of his youth; his father's farm in Homer, New York.

Homer, June 21, 1841

Sally Phelps: The day after I wrote to you from Rochester I was taken sick, and did not recover and yet able to start for Homer, till Saturday the 12th, and on Monday the 14th at 6 o'clock, p.m. I arrived to the astonishment -- and joy of my father's family. I found my father helpless; had a fit of the palsy two years and two months ago, which numbed half of his body and otherwise disabled him. Mother was well and healthy,

¹⁶Ibid., May, 1841, p458.

¹⁷Times and Seasons, Vol. 2, No. 17, May, 1841, pp. 458-59.

¹⁸The General Missionary Record, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1830-1855.

as well as Wilson, Joshua, Horton, and Eliza. Horton, the youngest is married and lives in our old house I found the seed of Mormonism sown ten years ago like the fire without wood, had gone out. Wilson and Joshua had been baptized into a sectarian Baptist Church, but father and mother remained like old Israel as Moses' "burning bush," unconsumed After my arrival I commenced my work, and on Saturday, after four days talking and diligent prayer, which was about the same as a four day meeting, we got into the wagon and went to visit Ruth and her husband who live on the river north a mile west of Dr. Pennils where I had the speakable joy of baptizing my father (who I carried in my arms into the water,) and my mother, and my brother, Joshua, while some of the rest of the family stood and cried. Joshua is a real Saint; for as soon as I commenced preaching he commenced searching the scriptures to see if I quoted correctly, and when he saw that I literally quoted and fairly explained the Bible, he joined with me and said, "O, it is just so, William is right!" My father lost his farm, and bought back fifty acres for \$500, which has been paid, but in his helpless condition, as all his children are of age, and excepting Joshua, in the world and for the world, he cannot do more than live. One of Marie Griswold's boys lives with him. Wilson is worth five or six hundred dollars and will keep it. Joshua owns fifty acres, the east half of father's farm which he will sell first opportunity Horton owns fifty acres . . . east of our old house, and he works and acts as if he would scratch old mother earth's head to a scab. Thus you have a sketch which will suffice till you see me Our old neighbors are anxious to see me and learn about our welfare and doctrine. They have not forgot to give you your due, a good name. My father's family all speak as it were the same language concerning you, both as to your pleasant disposition and red cheeks. . . . They bear an excellent crop of patience in age, and sincerity in religion. If you see Mr. Burdick tell him I have not as yet been able to go to (Hukiners?) for him. I had a three dollar bill given to me at Alron, which for fear you may need, I send; tis all I have, Sally, or you should have more. And if you get along without I know you will save it, to help us on to Newoo. Be faithful and patient, pray for him whose heart you know can feel the effects of humility. I do not know when I shall start home.

As Ever,

/s/ W. W. Phelps

P. S. I have been twice with a basket and fished for trout; catching a good mess each time. I have dried some which I mean to try and bring with me that you and the children may have a taste as well as me. You cannot realize my feelings nor suppose my anxiety for my wife and children. Tears tell what hearts hide with friends.¹⁹

¹⁹Phelps Letters, op. cit.

Leaving his father and mother, whom he would never see again in the flesh, W. W. Phelps started for Kirtland, Ohio, to rejoin his own family and make preparations to travel to Nauvoo -- the "City of Joseph."

Returning from his mission, Brother Phelps joined Almon Babbitt at Kirtland. Here he acted as clerk until he was appointed recorder to record licenses of the official members of the branch.²⁰

Later, at a conference meeting held October 3, 1841, Elder Phelps delivered a beautiful sermon on "Despise not prophesyings." W. W. Phelps discussed in this discourse "prophesying" and the "priesthood" as brought out in the Bible. "What a glorious record is the Bible!" exclaimed Brother Phelps, "I declare union with my brethren, and with the holy prophets, as did Amos 3:7: 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.'"²¹

William Wines Phelps had occupied a large place in the affections of his Prophet during their previous intimate association.²² Thus it was about this time that Brother Phelps started for Nauvoo to join the Saints and to again enjoy the close companionship of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The prodigal son had returned.

²⁰ Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 538.

²¹ Ibid.

²² George Q. Cannon, op. cit., p. 314.

CHAPTER VII

ACTIVITY DURING THE NAUVOO PERIOD

'Tis twelve o'clock, and all is well
In beautiful Nauvoo:
The old year's dead; the young one lives
To bless created things.

--W. W. Phelps

Move to Nauvoo

Although the records are silent regarding the occasion when W. W. Phelps first met Joseph after the scenes at Far West, it was undoubtedly similar to the incident (if not the very incident) that Daniel Tyler, author of History of the Mormon Battalion, alludes to when writing about the Prophet. He writes:

A man who had stood high in the Church while in Far West, was taken down with chills, or ague and fever. While his mind as well as his body was weak, disaffected parties soured his mind and persuaded him to leave the Saints and go with them. He gave some testimony against the Prophet . . . he went to work chopping cordwood to obtain means to take himself and family to Nauvoo and a present to the injured man of God, if peradventure he would forgive and permit him to return to the fold as a private member. He felt that there was salvation no where else for him and if that were denied him all was lost as far as he was concerned.

He started with a sorrowful heart and a down-cast look. While on the way the Lord told Brother Joseph he was coming. The Prophet looked out of the window and saw him coming up the street. As soon as he turned to open the gate, the Prophet sprang up from his chair and ran and met him in the yard, exclaiming, "O Brother _____, how glad I am to see you." He caught him around the neck and both wept like children.¹

¹Edwin F. Parry, Stories About Joseph Smith, A collection of incidents related by friends who knew him. A companion Volume to "Joseph Smith's Teachings" (The Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1934), p. 20.

William Wines Phelps and his family reached Nauvoo in a destitute condition. Willard Richards was later to write that "Brother Phelps owned no property in Nauvoo, but labored diligently for the Church and like all other righteous men he hardly received even a comfortable living.² Sister Phelps, at this time, taught school in addition to her household duties to help alleviate the situation.

Bishop Jonathan H. Hale of Nauvoo, wrote in his diary:

During the winter, he had opportunity to attend a school taught by Mrs. W. W. Phelps. He had to go barefooted, as he had no shoes. The teacher would permit him to warm his feet in the ashes at the edge of the fireplace. His only book was an old Elementary Speller.³

It is interesting to note that after living in an indigent condition at Nauvoo for a few years, W. W. Phelps wrote in poetry to the Prophet Joseph:

The goodly city of Nauvoo (And that will do).
 President Smith; how do ye do?
 From me this line will speak with you.
 Health, peace and grace, and all things, too
 Be unto thee, till life is through.
 A blight o'er me, has shadowed you;
 But still my soul to you is true;
 I ask no wealth of old or new,
 But come what will, I'll make it do.
 I cannot live as others do,
 And be a half a man with you:
 I am a man, as men can view
 And God will let me die or do!
 You bless the Twelve with things anew
 So bless my wife with something, too.
 Twelve years she's waded through
 The sea of woe without ado,
 And still remains the same -- and true:
 Deed her a lot; and that will do:
 (Clayton knows the one in view.)

²"Journal History," February 24, 1844.

³Heber Q. Hale, Bishop Jonathan H. Hale of Nauvoo, His Life and Ministry (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1938: Typewritten copy at Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah), p. 178.

May God your path with honor strew
 In Phelps' poetry to you.⁴

As a result, Joseph records in his journal, that "he deeded lot
 4, block 135, to Sally Phelps. . . ."⁵

Activities and Service

Few men living in Nauvoo at this time had a more intimate assoc-
 iation with the Prophet Joseph than did William W. Phelps. For example,
 on one occasion, the Prophet Joseph records:

I took dinner in the north room, and was remarking to
 Brother Phelps what a kind, provident wife I had, -- that
 when I wanted a little bread and milk she would load the table
 with so many good things, it would destroy my appetite. At this
 moment Emma came in, while Phelps, in continuation of the con-
 versation said, "You must do as Bonaparte did -- have a little
 table, just large enough for the victuals you want yourself."
 Mrs. Smith replied, "Mr. Smith is a bigger man than Bonaparte:
 he can never eat without his friends." I remarked, "That is
 the wisest thing I ever heard you say."⁶

Another illustration of their companionship is relived in a
 courtroom scene where a Mr. Marr and a Mr. Styles, attorneys, residents
 in Nauvoo, had made certain remarks pertaining to the "outrageous proceed-
 ings of Missouri." William W. Phelps and the Prophet then followed on
 the same subject.

Their language was thrillingly eloquent and powerful. If
 ever inhumanity and deeds of blood were depicted in their true
 colors, it was on that occasion: their thoughts flashed as
 fire, and they spake in words that burned.⁷

⁴ Phelps letters, op. cit., November 7, 1843.

⁵ Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 79.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 165-66.

⁷ Ibid., p. 118.

Their close association is again shown when the Prophet Joseph recorded: "I told Brother Phelps a dream that the history must go ahead before anything else."⁸ On another occasion he wrote: "I went into the assembly room, where I found Elders Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, and W. W. Phelps, to whom I related the following dream . . ."⁹

The services rendered, and the activities participated in by W. W. Phelps during the Nauveo period, were interwoven with the affairs of Joseph Smith; thus making Brother Phelps once again a key figure in the history of the Church. Also, the versatility of this man is again evident in the various activities of this part of his life.

His activities ranged from his position as fire warden to his position as mayor's clerk.¹⁰ His agenda was always full. During the day Brother Phelps might be at the printing office with Joseph proof reading the Doctrine and Covenants,¹¹ or possibly in conference with the Twelve Apostles.¹² On other occasions, William would be engaged in writing Joseph's history,¹³ or taking dictation from the Prophet on the subject of his "Views on the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States."¹⁴

⁸ Ibid., Vol. V, p. 394.

⁹ Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 194.

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 270-71.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 273.

¹² Ibid., pp. 331-32.

¹³ Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 66.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 189.

That the Prophet still had unlimited confidence in Brother Phelps as a writer, is further evidenced when he recorded:

. . . W. W. Phelps, Reynolds Cahoon, and Hosea Stout, were appointed to draft a preamble and resolutions expressive of the sentiments of the people of the city of Nauvoo relative to the repeated unlawful demands by the state of Missouri for the body of General Joseph Smith.¹⁵ . . .

Called at my office, and gave Brother Phelps the Zanesville Gazette of January 31, containing the speech of Cassius M. Clay, delivered in Scott county, Kentucky, December 30, 1843, on annexing Texas to the United States; and instructed him to reply to the same, and gave him the subject matter, and directed the manner I wished it done; and then rode out with Porter Rockwell.¹⁶

At seven p.m., the First Presidency, the Twelve, Bishop Miller, Live Richards, W. W. Phelps, and Lucian Woodworth assembled in the Mayor's office, when W. W. Phelps read the following pacific communication, which I had previously dictated him to write:-- A friendly hint to Missouri.¹⁷*

At the request of the Prophet Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps also wrote to other apostates who had made the same mistakes that he had, encouraging them to come back into the fold. For example, there was Warren

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 227.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

*It seems, however, that the Prophet was aware of the danger in Brother Phely's eccentric style of writing, as is evident in G. A. Smith's journal. He records: "That they stopped at the house of Mr. McMahon, a notorious anti-Mormon, at Green Plains, and waited some time for Mac to come in. Joseph and myself spent this time in conversation on the grass plot south of the house. Joseph asked my opinion of W. W. Phelps as an editor. I told him that I considered Phelps the sixth part of an editor, and that was the satirist. When it came to the cool direction necessarily intrusted to an editor in the control of public opinion -- the soothing of enmity, he was deficient and would always make more enemies than friends; but for my part, if I were able, I would be willing to pay Phelps for editing a paper, providing nobody else should have the privilege of reading it but myself. Joseph laughed heartily -- said I had the thing just right. Said he, 'Brother Phelps makes such a severe use of language as to make enemies all the time.'" -- Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 390-91.

Farrish who had been a seer during the dark days at Kirtland, Ohio, and who, like Brother Phelps had shared the Prophet's fullest confidence, as one of his closest and dearest friends. Through transgression, he had become one of the Prophet's bitterest enemies and led a movement to depose him and install David Whitmer in his stead.^{17a} With a sincere interest in helping Parrish, W. W. Phelps wrote, on March 22, 1843:

Dear Sir: While important times and overtures, are passing, together with the signs of the times, I have thought that I would drop you a line that perhaps you might yet think enough of the truth, as held sacred by the Latter-day Saints, to correspond with some of your old friends. Brother Hyrum Smith, or any of the "Twelve" receive such favors. The last time I saw you I think you said, "There were yet hopes" and that you would perhaps be as well off preaching the gospel, as pettifogging. This I know is true, and if you have a knowledge of the main principles of law, and a tolerable library, Nauvoo would certainly be as good a location as you could be characterized in by those that know you. Believe me, there is no place on earth like the home of the Saints. There is quite a number of lawyers and doctors etc., here now doing business in this city who are not, and I cannot say that they ever will be Mormons: And why should men who have tasted of the good word of God and know what is truth, not be among those who will do them good, and partake, . . .

We have a fine Temple preparing for another endowment, and the work goes on steadily in spite of all opposition. I want this letter to be an epistle general: as well to Zerrubbabel Snow, Esq., as you: and Oliver Cowdery, Esq., if you will give him a hint of it by writing. We are all little children as to the great things of eternity and when we begin to play and hurt another we ought to have humanity and good sense enough not to always act foolish, but to settle the matter by forgiveness and "be friends." Such a course would gentill for this world, and Angelic for the next. You would be the gainer, I think to come to the City of Saints, and see those with whom you used to sit in sweet council as men of God.

Give my respect to Mrs. Parrish and enquiring friends.

/s/ W. W. Phelps

P. S. I, in company with W. Richards, am writing for the Prophet as you used to.¹⁸

^{17a} Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 528.

¹⁸ Phelps Letters, op. cit., March 22, 1843.

Throughout the events of 1843 and 1844, W. W. Phelps was given other assignments. On October 24, 1843, he and Colonel Dunham started for Springfield to see the Governor, and endeavored to obtain from him the quota of state arms which belonged to the Nauvoo Legion.¹⁹

When they returned, Elder Phelps and Elders Richards, Hyde and Taylor, were instructed to write a "Proclamation to the Kings of the Earth."²⁰

It is significant, as far as W. W. Phelps is concerned, that not only did the Prophet Joseph appoint him for numerous written assignments, but he also used Brother Phelps in the role of a "spokesman." For example, during November of 1843, Joseph records: "After the meeting was organized, William W. Phelps read my 'Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys,' which was dictated by prayer after all had spoken upon it. . . ."²¹ Also, during January, 1844, a number of gentlemen were boarding at Joseph's house and conversing with him on national affairs. He sent for Brother Phelps, who came and read his letter to John C. Calhoun, with which they were highly edified.²² Later, during the month of March, William W. Phelps read Joseph's "Views of the Powers and Policy of the General Government of the United States, after which, it was voted, unanimously, with one exception, to uphold General Smith for the Presidency of the United States." An article was also read by W. W. Phelps, entitled, "A Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo."²³

¹⁹Smith, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 61.

²⁰Ibid., p. 80.

²¹Ibid., pp. 98-99.

²²Ibid., p. 170

²³Ibid., pp. 240-41.

A month before Joseph's death the correspondence of the "Central Committee for Government Reform of New York" was read by W. W. Phelps, as well as Joseph Smith's reply to the same.²⁴ Joseph also records: "In the evening I talked to the brethren at my house, Esquire Reid, my old lawyer, being present. W. W. Phelps, read my last letter to Henry Clay to the company."²⁵

At the outset of 1844, W. W. Phelps was elected as a member of the Nauvoo city council.²⁶ The following minutes from a special session held on March 5, 1844, is indicative of the active part played by Brother Phelps at those meetings.

Councilor Phelps suggested the propriety of licensing those who owned wharves to collect a tax for the landing of the boat.

Alderman Wells concurred.

Mayor said the land on the water's edge was a street.

Alderman Wells suggested the propriety of having the street worked as soon as may be.

Councilor Phelps said if Water Street extended round the city, then Kimball had been constructing a nuisance.

Mayor spoke in explanation, and said that Kimball said, if the city would make a wharf, he could give up what he had done.

Councilor Orson Spencer said he wished the mayor to execute the law of the city.

Councilor Brigham Young concurred.

Councilor W. W. Phelps proposed that Water Street be worked the whole length.

Moved by Brigham Young that the city council instruct the Mayor to order the supervisor to open Water Street from Joseph Smith's store north to the north line of the city.

Councilor Phelps approved of the motion, that the road might be cleared from rafts, and the rafts might also pay license.²⁷

²⁴Ibid., p. 387.

²⁵Ibid., p. 398.

²⁶Jensen, op. cit., p. 695.

²⁷Smith, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 234-35.

Death of Joseph Smith

In the difficulties leading up to the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother, Hyrum, Brother Phelps was active in the defense for the rights of his people. Many difficulties occurred between January, 1844 and June, 1844, and the "old cries" from Missouri proved to be a "thorn in the side" of the brethren. For example, on April 13, 1844, the Warsaw Signal stated:

All the articles to which Joe's name has appeared of late, as well as his Statesman-like "Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States," were written by the Immaculate William W. Phelps, Esq., the City Attorney for the Holy City, and Private Secretary to His Holiness Joe-- It will be noticed that this Phelps is the man whom Joe charged with having turned traitor, and sworn false, a few years since in Missouri.

We do not know whether Joe's charge against Phelps is true or not. This much, however, we do know -- that Phelps did swear that Joe was guilty of some of the most diabolical crimes known to our laws. How is it, Joe? Did he swear false? or are you guilty? . . . ²⁸

This was followed twelve days later by another article which read:

It can be proven that William W. Phelps, who swore that Smith and his clan were guilty, in Missouri, of deeds, black as ever were conceived in the brain of Satan himself, is now the bosom friend, and confidential clerk of the Prophet -- thus proving one of two things; either that Smith has a perjured villain for his most intimate associate, or that he himself has been guilty of acts that would disgrace Nero. ²⁹

Such accusations were answered by W. W. Phelps by an article, on May 20th, from the Nauvoo Neighbor, which stated:

²⁸ Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc. News Clippings, 1844, Vol. 2, Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah, p. 187.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 169.

On the 20th day of May, 1844, came W. W. Phelps before me, Willard Richards, Recorder of said city, and after being duly sworn, deposed and says, that the statements purporting to be his testimony against Joseph Smith, and others, as taken before some great Court in Missouri, is a sham; no legal court was held there, and the thing that was fixed, was guarded by mob soldiers; and the witnesses examined amid the firing of cannon, threats, imprecations and vengeance of said mob; continually echoing the diabolical power of said mock-tribunal, or inquisition; that there was no law for a Mormon in Missouri; that in such horrid duress your affiant used prudence to save his life, having saved it thrive before by a power above Missouri; wherefore the statement written by Missourians, sanctioned by Missourians; published by Missourians, and swallowed by apostates is a hoax just fit for mean men.³⁰

As a member of the Nauvoo City Council, William W. Phelps became mixed up in prosecuting the Laws and Fosters* etc., for perjury and slander,³¹ and also the destruction of the Nauvoo Expositor.³²

In the meeting concerning the Expositor, W. W. Phelps held that the city charter gave them power to declare the newspaper a nuisance, and

³⁰ Nauvoo Neighbor, Vol. 2, No. III, June 12, 1844, p. 255.

³¹ Smith, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 427.

³² Jensen, op. cit., p. 695.

* It is interesting to read from the Warsaw Signal as it states: "An article in the New York Tribune, purporting to have been written here, giving an exaggerated account of the state of things in this City. The writer had ventured to express an opinion relative to the professed talents of the great 'mormon prophet!' That there was a system of dipping afloat, based upon his pretended revelations -- that monies collected from the building of the Temple, was appropriated to private purposes . . . (An argument follows between the writer and Joseph.) He then imposed a fine of ten dollars upon me. Here my brother, R. D. Foster, interposed in my behalf; and he, Joe, threatened to fine him too, if he did not shut up; and the notorious W. W. Phelps, who has the honor of being his chief clerk, ordered me into the halls of the Marshal, remarking afterwards, the fine ought to have been fifty dollars."

-- Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc., op. cit., p. 414.

cited the spilling of the tea in Boston Harbor as a precedent for an attack on the Expositor office.³³

Following the Expositor affair, the plan of the Prophet Joseph was to "cross the river and go away to the west." He sent for Brother Phelps, and instructed him to take their families to Cincinnati by the second steambot, arriving at Nauvoo; and when he arrived there, "to commence petitioning the President of the United States and Congress for redress of grievances, and see if they would grant the Church liberty and equal rights." Joseph then said:

Go to our wives, and tell them what we have concluded to do, and learn their feelings on the subject; and tell Emma you will be ready to start by the steambot, and she has sufficient money wherewith to pay the expenses.³⁴

However, before this plan was put into operation, Joseph and others decided to return to Carthage and stand trial. On June 24, 1844, W. W. Phelps was one of the company that started with Joseph and Hyrum Smith for Carthage, Illinois.³⁵ When Brother Phelps heard Joseph say he was going to be slaughtered, he told the Prophet he was willing to die with him.³⁶ While traveling to Carthage, the Prophet Joseph related to W. W. Phelps and Hyrum Smith his last dream. He said:

While I was at Jordan's, in Iowa, the other night, I dreamed that myself and my brother Hyrum went on board a large steam boat, laying in a small bay near the great ocean. Shortly after we went on board there was an "alarm of fire" and I discovered that the boat had been anchored some distance from the shore out in the bay and that an escape from the fire in the confusion appeared hazardous; but as delay was folly, I and Hyrum jumped overboard and tried our faith at walking upon the water. At

³³ William Alexander Linn, The Story of the Mormons, (New York: The MacMillan Company, London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1923), p. 294.

³⁴ Smith, op. cit., pp. 547-48.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 554.

³⁶ Brigham Young, op. cit., (Vol. VII, Period II, Published by the Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1932), pp. 237-38.

At first we sank in the water nearly to our knees, but as we proceeded, we increased in faith and were soon able to walk upon the water.

On looking toward the burning boat in the east, we saw that it was drifting toward the wharf and the town with a great flame and clouds of smoke; and as if by whirlwind the town was taking fire too, so that the scene of destruction and horror of the frightened inhabitants was terrible. We proceeded on the bosom of the mighty deep and were soon out of sight of land; the ocean was still, the rays of the sun were bright and we forgot all the troubles of our Mother Earth. Just at that moment I heard the sound of a human voice and turning around saw my brother, Samuel H. approaching us from the east. We stopped and he came up. After a moments conversation he informed me that he had been lonesome back there and had made up his mind to go with me across the mighty deep.

We all started again and in a short time were blest with the first sight of a city, whose gold and silver steeples and towers were more beautiful than any I had ever seen or heard of on earth. It stood, as it were, upon the western shore of the mighty deep we were walking on, and its order and glory seemed far beyond the wisdom of man. While we were gazing upon the perfection of the city, a small boat launched off from the port and almost as quick as thought came to us. In an instant they took us on board and saluted us with a welcome and with music such as not of earth.

The next scene, on landing, was more than I can describe; the greeting of old friends; the music from a thousand towers; and the light of God himself at the return of three of his sons soothed my soul into a quiet, and a joy that I felt as if I was truly in heaven. I gazed upon the splendor; I greeted my friends; I awoke and lo, it was a dream. While I meditated upon such a marvelous scene I fell asleep again, and behold, I stood near the shore of the burning boat, and there was a great consternation among the officers, crew and passengers of the flaming craft, as there seemed to be much ammunition or powder on board. The alarm was given that the fire was near the magazine, and in a moment, suddenly, it blew up with a great noise and sank deep in the water with all aboard. I then turning to the country east, among the bushy openings, saw William and Wilson Law endeavoring to escape from the wild beasts of the forest, but two lions rushed out of the thicket and devoured them. I awoke again.³⁷

W. W. Phelps informs us that Joseph never told this dream again,

³⁷Personal Family Letter from Alice Phelps (Mrs. J. A. Malin)
1025 Marilyn Drive, Mt. View, California -- In a letter sent to the writer.

as he was martyred about two days after.*

William Phelps, in company with John F. Greene, left Carthage for Nauvoo, on June 27, 1844. They called at the jail about five o'clock in the morning to say goodbye. This was the last time that W. W. Phelps saw his beloved Prophet alive. Several hours later Joseph and Hyrum were murdered in cold blood.³⁸

On the day following the martyrdom, the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were taken to Nauvoo, where they were met by a heartbroken people on Mulholland Street, about a mile east of the Temple. The procession moved slowly into the city, to the Nauvoo Mansion where the bodies were given the care of their families and others.

In the streets around the Mansion House, ten thousand sorrowing saints had assembled.³⁹ They were addressed by W. W. Phelps and Willard Richards in a brief though very effecting manner upon the death of the Prophet and Patriarch, and also in regard to their situation. They advised the Saints to be quiet and say little and every man to mind his own business and let the Lord avenge the blood of his servants in his own due time.⁴⁰

³⁸ Smith, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 602.

³⁹ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 293.

⁴⁰ Biography and Journal of Benjamin Franklin Cummings, Pioneer of Utah, 1847, Transcribed 1933 at the instance of his grandson, Benjamin Cummings of Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, p. 11a.

* (W. W. Phelps later said he related this incident from recollection as nearly as he could.) This is a dream of Joseph Smith the day before he was shot. Given to Alice Phelps Malin by a cousin, Lydia Spry, a grand-daughter of W. W. Phelps, and was given to her by her mother, Lydia Phelps.

A short time later this was followed by a written word of consolation which in part read:

Be peaceable, quiet citizens, doing the works of righteousness, and as soon as the Twelve and other authorities can assemble, or a majority of them, the onward course to the great gathering of Israel, and the final consummation of the dispensation of the fulness of times will be pointed out

Union is peace, brethren, and eternal life is the greatest gift of God. Rejoice, then, that you are found worthy to live and die for God. Men may kill the body, but they cannot hurt the soul, and wisdom shall be justified of her children. Amen.

/s/ W. W. Phelps
Willard Richards⁴¹
John Taylor⁴¹

It is also interesting to note that on June 29th, at the mock funeral procession that was held to prevent the enemies of the martyred Prophet and Patriarch from getting possession of their bodies, William W. Phelps preached the funeral sermon.⁴²

No Support to Sidney

Following the martyrdom of the Prophet, the Church was thrown into momentary confusion. His death had not been anticipated by most of the Saints and as a result, the Church was as the sheep without a shepherd.

On August 3, 1844, Sidney Rigdon arrived at Nauvoo from Pittsburg. Elder Rigdon, in an address to the Saints, informed them that he had received a vision at Pittsburg, concerning the Church, and that the people should appoint a "guardian" for the Church. Another meeting was held, on August 8th, for the purpose of appointing "a guardian" to the Church.

⁴¹Brigham Young, op. cit., pp. 152-53.

⁴²Ibid., p. 628.

Fortunately for the Church, Brigham Young and members of the Quorum of the Twelve arrived in Nauvoo before this meeting was held. During said meeting, Sidney Rigdon claimed that he, himself, was to be the "guardian" to the Church as shown to him in his vision, and stressed the fact that he, at one time, had been appointed and ordained a "spokesman" to the Prophet Joseph. The next day was appointed, by Sidney Rigdon, for the Church to meet again and choose a "guardian." Thus, on the following day, before a tremendous crowd, the opportunity was given to Sidney to speak; which he did; setting forth his claim to the guardianship of the Church. He failed to convince the Saints that "he was sent of God."⁴³

During the next meeting, he was again given the opportunity to speak, but declined and requested W. W. Phelps to speak in his behalf.

Brother Phelps arose and said:

With the knowledge that I have I cannot suppose but that this congregation will act aright this day. I believe enough has been said to prepare the minds of the people to act.

I have known many of them for 14 years, and I have always known them to submit with deference to the authorities of the Church. I have seen the elders of Israel and the people -- take their lives in their hands and go without purse or scrip in winter and in summer. I have seen them prepare for war, and ready to pour out their hearts' blood, and that is an evidence that they will walk by counsel.

I am happy to see this little lake of faces, and to see the same spirit and disposition manifested here today, as it was the day after the bloody tragedy, when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were brought home dead to this city. Then you submitted to the law's slow delay, and handed the matter over to God; and I see the same thing today -- you are now determined as one man to sustain the authorities of the Church, and I am happy that the men who were on Joseph's right and left hand submit themselves to the authority of the priesthood.

⁴³ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 413-419.

I have feelings about this, especially for President Rigdon, and I want to say that there is a quorum that the Twelve belong to, and that the people will receive an endowment. I brought President Rigdon into that quorum, and he received in part the blessing. I could not bear the thought of President Rigdon going into the world without his endowment. He did obtain part, and I hope he will submit.

I want Brother Amasa to stand on the side of the Twelve, and they are wanted there still -- let them go on and sustain them in that high office. You cannot put in a guardian of the Church.

We have hitherto walked by sight, and if a man wanted to know anything he had only to go to Brother Joseph. Joseph has gone, but he has not left us comfortless

If you want to do right, uphold the Twelve. If they die, I am willing to die with them; but do your duty and you will be endowed. I will sustain the Twelve as long as I have breath.

When Joseph was going away he said he was going to die, and I said I was willing to die with him; but as I am now alive, as a lawyer in Israel, I am determined to live.

I want you all to recollect that Joseph and Hyrum have only been removed from the earth, and they now counsel and converse with the Gods beyond the reach of powder and ball.⁴⁴

Following this important speech, W. W. Phelps, on August 25, 1844, also bore testimony that:

Joseph said unto the Twelve 'upon you must rest the responsibility of bearing off the kingdom of God in all the world, therefore, round up your shoulders and bear it.'⁴⁵*

⁴⁴ Brigham Young, op. cit., pp. 237-38.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 264.

*This is important as corroborating a statement made many years subsequently by William Smith, brother of the Prophet at a court in Independence. He testified in that court in what is known as the "Temple Lot Suit" to obtain title to the Kirtland Temple by the organization known as the Josephite Church, vs. the Hedrickite Church, when he said President Joseph Smith ordained him (William Smith, who was one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at Kirtland) a prophet, seer, revelator, and translator, and then informed him that he had all the necessary ordinations to lead the church in his time. " -- Ibid., p. 264.

During subsequent events, Sidney Rigdon could not, nor would not, reconcile himself to the authority of the Quorum of the Twelve. As a result of his fantastic ideas, insubordination, and negative conduct, he was brought to trial on September 8, 1844.

Brother Phelps also played an important part at Rigdon's trial. He testified that:

It becomes necessary on this occasion that you should be acquainted with all the facts in the case. I am knowing myself to most of the facts. Perhaps I have taken a greater interest, and have been better disposed towards Sidney Rigdon than many would suppose under existing circumstances. I have endeavored to be his friend in every situation I could. When I learned he had arrived from Pittsburg I went to see him; and tried to find out his views and calculations on the subject, but in all his conduct there appeared to be something wrong, a reluctance to communicate. I have had as good a privilege of knowing the whole of Joseph Smith's revelations as any other man, and I know that the Twelve are the first in authority after the first presidency.

There are a few in authority in this place who have been sustaining Sidney Rigdon although the church voted to sustain the Twelve. I would give them all the advice I am able, to save them;

Now, I want he should be dealt with in justice, but yet with mercy, for I know that what you do here this day, will be sealed in heaven, . . . I think enough has been said to make the matter plain to the minds of the people. He has come and lied in the name of the Lord. He has told me two stories. He said he wanted to form an intimacy with the Twelve, but he has never taken one step to do it but has in every instance endeavored to shun them. The devil has blinded his eyes, and he has endeavored to blind the minds of the people against those revelations that have been our guide since we came into this Church The first thing Elder Rigdon endeavored to press upon the minds of the people, was the idea that it belonged to some person to rise up and build up the church to Joseph Smith, but there is no such thing written in the Bible, or the Book of Mormon, or the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. This church has been built up to Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith always taught us that there is no other name whereby we can be saved but in and through the name of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

⁴⁶
Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, No. 13, October, 1844, p. 662.

Elder W. W. Phelps then moved that Elder Sidney Rigdon be cut off from the church, and delivered over to the buffetings of satan until he repent.⁴⁷

Leadership Under the Twelve

On October 7, 1844, at the general conference, the General Authorities were sustained. W. W. Phelps "moved that we uphold Brigham Young the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, as one of the Twelve and the First Presidency of the Church."⁴⁸

In a letter to William Smith, he wrote:

. . . you may set me down as a living monument of Mormonism, and with the Twelve, there will then be thirteen united saints, bearing this testimony to the world that God, man, and Mormonism, are not only material, but eternal, and therefore, like Jesus, when martyred they come to life again.

. . . furthermore, that the twelve were known from before the foundation of the world, and are thus noticed in the prophecy of Zenos in the Book of Mormon; I mean in that masterly parable of the "Olive Tree"; all men acquainted with revelation and the spirit of God, have agreed that the "servant" spoken of in that parable, was Joseph Smith, and when the Lord commanded him to "go to and call other servants," and "they did go to it with their might," -- as the whole has been backed up by revelations in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, it would require more than "mortal" to prove that allusion to the "servants meant anybody but the 'twelve.'" . . .

I know the Twelve, and they know me.--Their names are Brigham Young, the lion of the Lord; Heber C. Kimball, the herald of grace; Parley P. Pratt, the archer of paradise; Lyman Wight, the wild man of the mountain; Orson Hyde, the olive branch of Israel; Willard Richards, the keeper of the rolls; William Smith, the patriarchal Jacob staff; Wilford Woodruff, the banner of the gospel; George A. Smith, the entablature of truth; Orson Pratt, the gauge of philosophy; John E. Page, the sun dial. And

⁴⁷ Brigham Young, op. cit., pp. 268-69.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 294.

they are good men; the best the Lord can find; they do the will of God, and the saints know it.

So now, dear brother, while I respect you and the "twelve," and all their kin, as my own blood relations, shall we, as the legal heirs of salvation, enlightened by the voice of God; by revelation upon revelation; by the gift of the Holy Ghost bringing all things to our remembrance; shall we, who have witnessed the power of God in the spread of the everlasting gospel; in the manifestations of the gift of tongues; the miraculous healing of the sick by the laying on the hands of the elders; shall we, who have spent so many sweet hours under the holy droppings of the Prophet's golden fountain; who have been delighted at his heavenly knowledge combating the errors of generations; teaching senators wisdom; judges justice; priests piety, and mankind mercy; shall we, who have beheld prophecies fulfilled knowing that the very bowels of the earth have gave up her "stony ruins," to establish the validity of the Book of Mormon, beyond a doubt; shall we, who have heard the echo of glad tidings from the islands of the sea, and from all quarters of the earth; shall we, who now gaze upon the blood stained prairies of the west; where bleaches the bones of the prophets, patriarch, elders, men, women, and children, who all gave up the ghost in full faith; shall we, who have tested to the good word of God, and seen the mysteries of the world come, shall we turn to the beggarly elements of the world to work our passage back to popularity and hell for "a mess of pottage," like Hinkle, Bennett, Law, Higdon, and Co.? No! Eternally no! . . . While water runs and grass grows, while eternity goes and eternity comes we will go on, knowing that it is written in heaven; published on earth, and muttered in hell, that Mormonism is ETERNAL TRUTH, and God Almighty is the author of it!⁴⁹

At this same conference, held in Nauvoo, October 7, 1844, we find W. W. Phelps assisting Willard Richards in gathering material for the history of the Church. Later, at a special conference, held at Nauvoo, April 7, 1845, W. W. Phelps moved that "we accept the labors of Joseph Smith as Prophet, Seer and Revelator to the nineteenth century and that the conference accept the Twelve as the First Presidency and leaders of the Church," which votes were carried unanimously.

In September, 1845, Brother Phelps and others of the brethren were summoned to Carthage to be tried for treason. They were promptly

⁴⁹

Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, No. 24, Dec. 25, 1844, pp. 757-761.

discharged. At a council meeting, held at Nauvoo, October 4, 1845, W. W. Phelps and others were appointed to a committee to write a pointed document relating to the treatment the Saints had received from the government.⁵⁰

During this same conference, Heber C. Kimball made the statement:

There is yet another piece of business of great importance to all who have families; that is, to have some school books printed for the education of our children, which will not be according to the Gentile order.⁵¹

W. W. Phelps then said:

As a people we are fast approaching a desired end, which may literally be called a beginning. Thus far, we cannot be reproached with being backward in instruction. By revelation, in 1831, I was appointed to 'do the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church, that little children might receive instruction;' and since then I have received a further sanction. We are preparing to go out from among the people, where we can serve God in righteousness; and the first thing is, to teach our children; for they are as the Israel of old. It is our children who will take the kingdom and bear it off to all the world. The first commandment with promise to Israel was, 'Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' We will instruct our children in the paths of righteousness; and we want that instruction compiled in a book.⁵²

Following his statement, it was moved, seconded and carried that Brother Phelps write some school books.⁵³

Nauvoo and the Temple

Under the management of the Twelve Apostles, affairs at Nauvoo were being regulated in preparation for the exodus to the Great Basin.

⁵⁰Jensen, op. cit., p. 695.

⁵¹Brigham Young, op. cit., p. 474.

⁵²Ibid., p. 475.

⁵³Ibid.

Foremost in the minds of the Brethren, was the completion of the Nauvoo Temple. W. W. Phelps, on September 15, 1845, had written:

We are now in the midst of another great mob; from forty to fifty houses have been burned in the Great Plains and Lima branches of the Saints, and of course two or three hundred poor people are thrown houseless upon the naked air. The French drove the Arabs into the cave, and smothered them to death, but the Americans drive the Saints out of their houses, burn their dwellings, and leave the inmates to perish; which shows the most shocking barbarity in this Christian age! Last night Brother _____, four miles this side of Carthage, had his house, barn, and grain burnt. We are at peace in Nauvoo. The temple is finishing rapidly, the steeple is outwardly finished and looks grand. The Nauvoo house has arisen within three weeks nearly two stories. We have had a good season for grain, some has been burned by the mob, yet I have no reflections to make, for while wickedness reigns, and the hearts of wicked men are stirred up to do evil, the Saints, if they live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; yet we wait patiently for those blessings which the Lord has promised to those who come up through great tribulation. We have had a more healthy season than last year. Under the management of the twelve everything has flourished so viable that no one can doubt that the Lord is with the Saints in Nauvoo. We have had a paradisiac summer. A desire often darts across the mind to retire from the midst of the cares and busy scenes of life, to some secluded spot; but in a moment I reflect -- "no cross, no crown," and go ahead.

Light as the cloud in yonder sky, ⁵⁴
To gain the bliss of those on high.

As the temple was "finishing rapidly" the long awaited endowment would soon be given to the faithful Saints. An interesting example of how serious the Saints regarded this work happened one day, when (before the Prophet's death), W. W. Phelps came in while Joseph was eating and showed a paper in his hand, saying to the Prophet, "Here is a list of names and the amounts they have subscribed for the Temple."

⁵⁴ Millennial Star, Vol. VI, Liverpool: Published by Wilford Woodruff and Thomas Ward, Stanley Buildings, Bath Street, p. 154.

Joseph took the paper and ran over the names and amounts, and returned the paper saying as he did so, "They have done well, and may God bless them. They will get for this what they can't buy at a grocery. In fifty years that house will be taken from the earth."^{55*}

In his letter to William Smith, on December 25, 1844, Brother Phelps writes concerning Nauvoo and the Temple:

I shall not describe the localities of Nauvoo, now, because I shall not have room; but as to the facilities, tranquillities, and virtues of the city, they are not equalled on the globe. . . .

The temple is up as high as the caps of the pilasters, and it looks majestic and especially to me, when I know that the tithing, "the mites of the poor," thus speaks of the glory of God. All the description that is necessary to give you now, is that this splendid model of Mormon grandeur, exhibits thirty hewn stone pilasters which cost about \$3,000 apiece. -- The base is a crescent new moon: the capitols, near fifty feet high, the sun, with a human face in bold relief, about two and a half feet broad, ornamented with rays of light and waves, surmounted by two hands holding two trumpets. It is always too much trouble to describe an unfinished building. The inside work is now going forward as fast as possible. When the whole structure is completed it will cost some five or six hundred thousand dollars; and as Captain Brown of Tobasco, near the ruins of Panamae, said, "it will look the nearest like the splendid remains of antiquity in Central America of anything he had seen, though not half so large."

I speak advisedly when I say Nauvoo is the best place in the world. No vice is meant to be tolerated; no grog shops allowed; nor would we have any trouble, if it were not for our lenity is suffering the world, as I shall call them

⁵⁵ Huntington Diary, op. cit., p. 164.

* Oliver H. Huntington writes the following in his journal: "At Cedar Springs (on my way home from St. George) I had an interview with old sister Hildy Burns, a wife of Heber C. Kimball, now 77 years old; and from her I learned the foregoing special items of intelligence that are perhaps nowhere written. They are the natural outgrowth of conversation and questions.

This, she said she heard him say, and asked W. W. Phelps one time in Salt Lake City if he remembered it. He said he did. Ibid.

The other public buildings in Nauvoo, besides the temple, are the Seventies' Hall, the Masonic Hall, and the Concert Hall; all spacious and well calculated for their designated purposes.

There is no licensed grocery to sell or give away liquors of any kind in the city; drunkards are scarce. Probable number of inhabitants, 14,000: nine-tenths Mormons.

The temple is erected from white limestone wrought in a superior style; is 128 by 83 feet square; near 60 feet high: two stories in the clear, and two half stories in the recesses over the arches; four tiers of windows; two gothic and two round. The two great stories will have two pulpits, one at each end; to accommodate the Melchisedek and Aaronic priesthoods; graded into four rising seats You know I am no Gentile, and of course, do not believe that a monastery, cathedral, chapel or meeting house erected by the notions and calculations of men, has any more sanction from God than any common house in Babylon.

The steeple of our temple will be high enough to answer for a tower; -- between 100 and 200 feet high. But I have said enough about the temple; when finished it will show more wealth, more art, more science, more revelation, more splendor, and more God, than all the rest of the world, and that will make it a Mormon Temple. . . .

Brother Phelps and his wife were among the first to receive their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple, in December, 1845; afterwards Brother Phelps became an ordinance worker in that sacred edifice, until the Saints started west towards the Great Basin.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, No. 24, January, 1845, p. 759.

⁵⁷ Jensen, op. cit., p. 695.

CHAPTER VIII

TO THE WEST WITH THE RAMAGE PRESS

There is nothing like the "Mormons,"
For they go at God's command,
And they scale the highest mountains,
And they compass sea and land.

-- W. W. Phelps

Last Days at Nauvoo

William Wines Phelps did not start west with the company of Saints that made the exodus from Nauvoo, on February 4, 1846. Instead of leaving on that historic day, he was to remain and take care of some unfinished business at Nauvoo. For example, one letter from the leading brethren at the "Camps of Israel," contained the following instructions:

Say to Brother Phelps, that we wish him to case and box the sun dial we left at Nauvoo; pack it close, with the press, so that it will set easy and not chafe. . . .¹

On March 25, 1846, Brother Phelps wrote:

. . . I read your epistle to the "left Saints," and permit me to say, after we addressed it gave a "zeal" and a "fire to feeling" which let up a mile in this aspect of woe.²

In describing the situation at Nauvoo in this letter, he mentioned the fact that everything had "free toleration." He also pointed out the lack of restraint and drunkenness which existed among the mob at Nauvoo at this time.³

¹"Journal History," March 16, 1846.

²Phelps letters, op. cit.

³Ibid., to Willard Richards, March 25, 1846.

In a letter to Brigham Young, on June 3, 1846, in preparation for his departure from Nauvoo, Brother Phelps wrote:

Well, I am still at the "stepping ground." The trustees have made no move towards furnishing any means for procuring new type; they sold most of our old, and of course new must be had. They have an office they tell me to sell, but the distance of payment is so far ahead that I am almost ready to conclude that I may as well start and let them send a new press type hereafter; . . .

. . . . The Mormons generally, (save the poor, among whom are many widows) have left Nauvoo. . . . I think I shall wait for means but a little longer

I have been in hopes that Brother Neff would arrive and that he would have means to help this printing concern, but I am of opinion from what I hear that he will not be in time, as I must leave when the "Mountain Rise" comes.⁴

It is evident from his letter that part of his business at Nauvoo was to secure new type from the press. However, on June 10, 1846, he closed his last letter to President Young thusly:

. . . . The mob has collected at several points and are threatening Nauvoo on Friday. The new citizens are preparing by "resolutions," etc. This truly is a day of passing strangeness. I am in hopes I shall be able to take the "Mountain Rise" and meet you at "Council Bluffs."⁵

In conjunction with his letters concerning Nauvoo, the St. Louis Daily, printed the following on June 29, 1846.

Peace having been once more restored in this illfated village, merchants and others who boxed up their effects in anticipation of an invasion, have unpacked and again returned to their accustomed vocations. Tranquility appears to be restored and peace established, we hope, upon a firm foundation. The Mormons still continue to leave, and the few remaining ones are busily engaged in making preparations for following as speedily as possible A number of these miserable families came down to this city

⁴ Ibid., June 3, 1846.

⁵ Ibid., June 10, 1846.

on Friday and Saturday of last week, bound for Council Bluffs to join the main caravan which will rendezvous at that point; others knew not where they were going. Phelps, formerly editor of the Nauvoo Neighbor, has taken up his line of march for parts unknown, and there are but few more of the Tribunes left.⁶

On November 4, 1846, William W. Phelps met Heber C. Kimball and President Brigham Young, and returned with them to the "Camps of Israel."^{6a}

The Remage Press

After spending the winter at Winter Quarters, Elder W. W. Phelps, on March 31, 1847, was authorized to go east and procure a printing press and type.⁷ To help in the fulfilling of this assignment, he was given two letters. The first letter was addressed to the "Saints in the United States and Canada," from Brigham Young and the Twelve. It read:

By our well beloved Brother Elder W. W. Phelps whom we have delegated on a special mission to such regions among you as he shall find necessary to procure means to purchase a printing press, type, fixtures and papers for the benefit of the Saints in camp, . . . we earnestly solicit you to receive Elder Phelps, an aged and faithful servant in Israel, and one who is nobly striving to accomplish a good work as our messenger; and assist him in this noble enterprise, with such means as our Heavenly Father has placed at your disposal that he may soon return . . . Elder Phelps has been in camp with us the past winter and understands our present situation and future prospects, so far as they are known; and it will be his duty to instruct and council the brethren, wherever he may go, in wisdom, as he shall be led by the Holy Spirit; and we invite all Saints to receive the blessings which will follow them through obedience to his teachings.⁸

It is interesting to note that W. W. Phelps was referred to as "an aged and faithful" servant. He was only fifty-five. However, most of the church leaders were young men, and the average age of the first

⁶ Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc., News Clippings, Vol. 8, Brigham Young University Library, p. 325.

^{6a} "Journal History," November 4, 1846.

⁷ Ibid, March 31, 1847.

company of pioneers was only thirty-three. Brigham Young was forty-six, while George A. Smith, who was one of the apostles, was still in his twenties.⁹ Nevertheless, the versatile William W. Phelps was old in experience, especially in the publishing business.

The other letter was addressed to Hobbitt, Heywood, and Pullmer, who were the three trustees permitted by the mob to remain in Nauvoo. In describing the need for the printing equipment, the message read:

We have delegated our brother, W. W. Phelps, Esq., to visit you, and procure the necessary apparatus, for printing books, and papers at our camp next winter, paper not excepted.

This people cannot live without intelligence, for it is through obedience to that principle they are to receive their exaltation; and if the intelligence cannot be had, justice has no claim on obedience, and their exaltation must be decreased. This principle is sufficient to show you that importance of using all diligence in helping Elder Phelps to bring us the materials, whereby we can furnish our children with books, and the Saints with new things to feast the soul.

Before leaving on his mission, however, Brother Phelps was appointed to a committee, on April 16, 1847, to help settle existing difficulties with Big Elk, chief of the Omaha Indians, whose braves had been killing their cattle near Winter Quarters.¹¹ At this time Brother Phelps was also assigned to sell "certain lands, which had been surveyed."¹²

⁹ Ashton, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰ "Journal History," April 1, 1847.

¹¹

Diary of Hosea Stout, Vol. III, September 1846 to June 1848, typewritten copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, p. 102.

¹²

Ashton, op. cit., p. 9.

After the lapse of a month, W. W. Phelps started east to purchase a press. His journey took him to Nauvoo, once "the beautiful", but now a city of broken fences, splintered windows, cobwebs, weeds, toads and rats.¹³

After presenting his letter to the trustees, W. W. Phelps was rummaging over his old papers in their office and found a letter bearing the name of Reuben Miller, who was a tried member of the church from Burlington, Wisconsin.¹⁴ On May 30, 1847, Brother Phelps wrote to Miller as follows:

Dear Sir: Having been appointed by the twelve on a special and last mission in the United States, and seeing a letter with your name to it in the Trustee's office at this place, I thought I would drop you a line. The council of Twelve wrote you a letter of advice last winter. The purpose of which was "for you to dispose of your possessions where you live, gather all the means you could, and move on to this 'Camp of Israel' as soon as possible, and your further duty would be made known to you by the Council," etc.

My mission, as the Twelve have gone over the mountains as pioneers, is being important . . . could you see me immediately or write, I could advise you what is the first thing necessary and so on . . .¹⁵ I shall be here a week or two more then proceed eastward.

In this letter Brother Phelps also requested Miller to send fifty dollars for the funds to purchase the printing equipment to take to the mountains.¹⁶

¹³ Ashton, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁴ Kate B. Carter, Heart Throbs of the West, (Vol. II, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1950), p. 297.

¹⁵ Phelps Letters, op. cit.

¹⁶ Carter, loc. cit.

From Nanwoo, William Phelps continued eastward until he reached Boston. There is good reason to believe that Brother Phelps deliberately made his way to Boston to contact an early convert to the Church. His name was Alexander Badlam, who was a generous and wealthy varnish maker by trade.¹⁷ His wife, Mary Ann Brannan Badlam, was a sister of Samuel Brannan who was already on the high seas with Saints headed toward the California coast. The Badlams accepted their fellow Mormon gladly and while helping him to raise funds to purchase the press, were most kind to him. Brother Phelps, while in Boston, wrote a letter to William I. Appleby in the mission home in Reckletown, New Jersey, asking for money.¹⁸

Upon receiving W. W. Phelps' letter, Brother Appleby, in his personal journal, records:

I received a letter from Elder W. W. Phelps from Boston, (who had been sent by the authorities of the Church) to procure a printing press type, papers, & co., to take over the mountains to the Salt Lake City requesting me to assist him in raising means to obtain the press, etc. After tarrying in Philadelphia, about a week, attending the baptism of six members, preaching two or three times, and obtaining about sixty dollars of the Saints towards the press¹⁹

Receiving no further word in almost a month, Appleby left for New York "in order to hear from Elder Phelps." In New York or Brooklyn (at the home of Elder Miles), Appleby received a letter from Badlam in Boston informing him that by August 25, 1847, the press had been secured.

¹⁷ Ashton, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁸ Carter, op. cit., p. 297.

¹⁹ William I. Appleby, "Biography and Journal of William I. Appleby," Reckletown, New Jersey, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Elder Phelps had procured the printing press & co., in Boston, and had left for Batavia, New York, Brother Badlam having advanced means to procure it. And by the request of Elder Phelps by letter to me, for to remit what monies I had collected in Philadelphia for the press to Elder Badlam. Accordingly, I sent sixty one dollars, the amount I had collected by Adams and Co., Express to Elder Badlam . . . a few days after I received of Elder Badlam a receipt for the same.²⁰

It should be noted that although William Appleby did not describe in his journal the press which Phelps obtained in Boston, it was in all probability the Range hand press which three years later yielded the first copies of the Deseret News.²¹

On his return to Winter Quarters he visited many of the branches in the east. After listening to his preach, on August 22, 1847, Oliver B. Huntington recorded in his diary:

. . . such a discourse of strong meat they never heard in that branch before; but, 'twas good. I never had much acquaintance with him before, but I found he was as deceiving, at first, as any man I ever saw. He knew seemingly everything for a man, and all the learning was his, but at first sight his looks and motions said he was just two thirds man, only. But there was no end to the knowledge continually poured out by him, as well as amusement.²²

After being absent some six months, W. W. Phelps returned to Winter Quarters, on November 12, 1847, with the printing press. His arrival was almost exactly timed with that of Brigham Young and other Church leaders who had arrived from the Rocky Mountains after seeing the

²⁰ Appleby Biography, op. cit.

²¹ See Appendix G, p. 221.

²² "Diary of Oliver B. Huntington," 1842-1847, Part I, copied by the Brigham Young University Library, 1942, p. 163.

Saints of the Pioneer company, the Mississippi Saints, and some Mormon Battalion members settled in the Great Basin. The day after his arrival Phelps reported to the Council of the Twelve that he had "obtained a press, type, and paper to take over the mountains." His first assignment, in part, was successfully completed.²³

However, Brother Phelps was not entirely satisfied, as he wanted some fine type for the printing equipment. Thus, he again wrote to Reuben Miller, on November 20, 1847, as follows:

I wrote to you while in Nauvoo last summer in relation to raising money for a press. I have raised a press and type, and a little press for the Twelve, but I want fifty dollars to buy fine type for them and as I learn that you . . . mean to put in fifty dollars, I drop you this line that you may immediately on receiving it send me the fifty dollars, or a draft (or that amount on the Missouri Bank at St. Louis,) to complete the establishment and gratify the Twelve.

Everything goes well; the place "sought out" over the mountain is first rate specimen of Salt and Salatus we brought back, and all is right. I have been in Council with the Twelve several days. . . .²⁴

The Repentant Spirit of W. W. Phelps

Soon after Brother Phelps returned to Winter Quarters, his conduct was of such a nature that only his genuine, repentant spirit saved him from serious difficulty. One such case is found in the diary of Hosea Stout, on November 22, 1847, when a Brother L. H. Calkins charged W. W. Phelps for refusing to pay a debt that he owed. At a meeting of the council, on November 28, 1847, Brother Phelps came to terms with Calkins and confessed that it was his fault. Stout records:

²³Carter, op. cit., p. 298.

²⁴Phelps Letters, op. cit.

. . . . The council forgave him. He thanked them and told them that he would try and do them as good a turn some time. I could not help but admire how good and ready he was at a confession²⁵

A more serious charge is recorded, however, in the "Journal History of the Church," on November 30, 1847. On this date a council meeting was held where Brother Phelps confessed that he had been guilty of misconduct while in the east after the press. Brigham Young, hearing his own admission, concluded that he had sinned, and recommended that W. W. Phelps be cut off from the church.²⁶ However, after Brother Phelps had confessed that he had erred in both doctrine and conduct he showed such a genuine spirit of repentance that he was re-baptized on December 11, 1847, and confirmed under the hands of Brigham Young, W. W. Richards, and Joseph Young.²⁷

Brigham Young's toleration and magnanimity in this case was vindicated, for William Wines Phelps' future life and usefulness in the early history of Utah justified the generous treatment he received.

To the Great Basin

During the winter of 1848-1849, prospects were dim for taking Brother Phelps' printing press west. Provisions, women, children, equipment for settlement, all gained priority as spring dawned. By the end of May, hundreds were on the trail, and the largest company to make the westward journey was on its way. On the roster was William W. Phelps; but

²⁵ Stout Diary, op. cit., pp. 190-91.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

²⁷ Phelps' Family file, Church Historians Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

the valued press was left behind in Winter Quarters. His disappointment was great, but the necessity of using every team for other purposes was imperative. Brother Phelps finally arrived in the Great Basin with the second pioneer company.²⁸

However, the press soon followed, and on June 15, 1850, the long awaited day came, when the little Range hand press was actually printing news in the valley. The day had dawned when William Wines Phelps saw his assignment successfully accomplished. The future outlook was most encouraging, circulation for the first year was about two fifty and climbed to near seven hundred the second season. One hundred years of news reporting and publishing was to follow this humble beginning, the like of which W. W. Phelps could never predict nor live to see.²⁹

²⁸ Carter, op. cit., p. 298.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 299.

CHAPTER IX

PIONEER DAYS IN UTAH

We live in Salt Lake Valley,
With health and freedom blest;
To fit ourselves for glory --
A thousand years of rest.

--W. W. Phelps

Early Participation in Political and Civil Affairs

Following his entry into the valley with the Brigham Young Company, Brother Phelps camped at the Old Fort, (now known as Pioneer Park) and with the aid of his sons, constructed a dozy brick house. This house he occupied until the time of his death in 1872.¹

Richard Burton said of his visit to Brother Phelps:

. . . His house, which lies west of Temple Block, bears on the weathercock (Job, xxxvii., 35, "Adsumus:" "Here we are").²

After his arrival in the Great Salt Lake Valley, the versatile Phelps became as active as he had been in the East.

Since no attempt was made to organize a civil government until the return of Brigham Young from Winter Quarters in the fall of 1848, a call was issued on February 1, 1849, for a convention of "the inhabitants of that portion of Upper California lying east of the Sierra Nevada mountains."³

¹Alice Phelps Malin, letter, op. cit.

²Richard F. Burton, The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, Franklin Square, 1862), p. 253.

³Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Utah (The History Co., Publishers, San Francisco: 1890), p. 440.

Thus, on March 4, 1849, a convention assembled in Salt Lake City "for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of organizing a territorial or State government."⁴ On this same date, W. W. Phelps was appointed to assist in drafting for, and reporting to this convention, a constitution under which "the inhabitants might organize and govern themselves until the Congress of the United States should otherwise provide by law."⁵

Concerning the meetings of this convention, Hyrum L. Andrus writes:

The meeting of the council March 4, 1849, was a very important one. It was here that further plans for establishing the State of Deseret were made

In the afternoon session, the council again turned its attention to the work of organizing the forthcoming government; and "the subject of nominating officers for election for a provisional government was presented." It was then "voted that the names already approved be brought before the people for their ratification."⁶

.
At its meeting, March 10th, the day the convention completed its business, William W. Phelps of the council's committee on elections, "presented the election ticket" to the General Council. His report was accepted;⁷

In addition to his appointment as a member of the constitution convention, Brother Phelps was appointed on March 4, 1849, to serve on a

⁴ William E. Berrett, The Restored Church (Seventh Edition, 1953, Published by the Department of Education of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949), p. 405.

⁵ Bancroft, loc. cit.

⁶ Dr. Hyrum L. Andrus, Joseph Smith and World Government (Published by the Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1958,) p. 109.

⁷ Ibid.

canal committee. The objective of this committee was to:

. . . ascertain forthwith the amount of digging that would be required to be done on the irrigating canal by each individual owning land in the Big Field and in the city, and to apportion to each individual concerned the amount of digging required of him . . .⁸

Thus on April 5, 1849, Brother Phelps reported on behalf of the committee:

. . . that the canal be dug 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep; at some places deeper: the embankments built with cobbles. No specific plans could be hit upon to make the dams. After this year it could be widened as wanted.⁹

As a consequence of his efforts on this committee, the versatile Phelps was appointed surveyor general and chief engineer of the Great Salt Lake Valley to "superintend the public surveying, mapping, and mineralogy of the valley."¹⁰

In September, 1850, an act was passed by Congress, creating not the "State of Deseret" but the "Territory of Utah."¹¹ As a result, when the general election for state and county offices was held on August 4, 1851, to fill the legislative positions, W. W. Phelps was elected to the House of Representatives.¹² Further, when the first legislature of the new Utah Territory convened on September 22, 1851, Brother Phelps was elected as speaker of the House.¹³

⁸"Salt Lake Stake Records," March 4, 1849, LDS Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah

⁹Ibid., April 5, 1849.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Berrett, op. cit., p. 406.

¹²Diary of Hosea Stout, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 408.

¹³Jensen, Church Chronology, op. cit., p. 44.

Contemporary with these events, trouble was developing between the newly appointed United States officials for the Territory and the people of Utah. Judge Brocchus was the first official to create a conflict. According to B. H. Roberts, this man, in an address, had attacked the practice of plural marriage among the people when he admonished the ladies of the audience "to become virtuous." Roberts states that, "this expression was most offensive, and aroused great indignation."¹⁴ This speech, and similar incidents culminated in the appointees deserting their posts and leaving Utah to return to the east.

Although the episode of the "run-away" officials was not taken very seriously in Utah, the situation was just the opposite in the east, when as Roberts states:

. . . their return and reports created a sensation that it is no exaggeration to call tremendous,¹⁵

A number of eastern papers published a most vicious attack upon Brigham Young's character on the ground of his alleged record both in Illinois and Utah; and asserting that President Fillmore had known of this record and the "immoralities" charged against Utah's governor before appointing him to office

Thus it was during these events, that William Wines Phelps, as speaker of the House, wrote in defense of Utah and her people. For example, on June 25, 1852, Brother Phelps wrote an extraordinary letter addressed to Colonel Kane.

No land has ever been sold in this territory, bonifidely, for the simple reason that the Indian title has not been extinguished, and it could not come into market The 'coin' of the nation has not been counterfeited, nor anything but 'gold

¹⁴ Roberts, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 524.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 534.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 537.

and silver⁴ made a lawful tender. To be sure we have struck many lumps of pure gold with a motto on one side 'Holiness to the Lord,' etc., but it remains to be decided whether such lumps of 'Bullion,' made for convenience, would be money without a Statute law No person has ever been tried for crime, but by due course of law, on presentment by a Jury. There is no prison in the Territory, and if the Judges sent to preside here, knew of any prisoners in 'durance vile' had they not the power to inquire into the matter, and give names and facts instead of allusions? I think so. Taxes troubled them, but no tax has yet been levied or collected but what were sanctioned by a vote of the people, except a few immigrants who shared our bounty from Indian depredation The Territory is not in debt, nor have we had to loan money to carry on the government. . . . Public opinion, in spite of 'blackmail,' want, vagabond, slander, clerical duplicity or anonymous outsiders, will give our charity, friendship, and 'such as we had' -- to strangers, gold diggers and all, the deserved credit, and that will be glory enough for a Mormon's humanity. . . . The unparadonable birthright of Governor Young's 'unbounded influence' especially among the Mormons, as a source of grief, like 'woeful Weeds of Wo,' gave the Judges pain -- because probably, while fleeing before persecutors, in the wild camp among savages, he caused 500 valiant soldiers upon call, to go and help conquer California, open the gold mines, and then, at a word, come home, and with their brethren, turn the barren desert into fields of grain, and make the 'wild crop blossom as the rose.' Such 'unbounded influence' as carries glad tidings to the four quarters of the earth, and brings together the growing masses of mankind and concentrates their energies, minds, means, and powers, as one man, unto a perfect Union, is, what shall I call it? A subject of fear or joy? Censure or honor? Vice or virtue? Slander or truth? Let the Voice of reason answer

. . . . I will venture to declare that had such 'legal cowards,' who testify as such 'willing witnesses' against Mormon customs and paradoxes without being called upon, possessed honor and industry enough to have joined the 'Regular Army,' as common soldiers, and deserted their posts as sentinels, as they did the Judges, they would have been shot for desertion The soldier exposes his camp to his enemy, and they judge the honor of his nation to the disgrace of a lawless world.-- We shall hope, we shall struggle on -- we shall work on!

After Dr. Bernhisel was elected (and his nomination was got up before he arrived back in the Territory), Brocchus, disappointed because he wanted to be returned to Washington, said if Bernhisel does not bring all his influence to raise the salaries of the Judges 'I'll bring all my influence to bear, and curse the d---d Mormons!'

The 'seditious language' of Governor Young, and others, can be explained. After being mobbed, robbed and driven some half a dozen times, it will be considered blasphemy or treason for the Mormons at their festivals and celebrations, to condemn and

censure, in strong and well-timed satire and language, demagogues, landsharks, mobbers, and dark lanterned priests who wink at law, and fatten on the 'loaves and fishes' of government impunity But has any man, or gentleman I should say, or officer of the Government ever heard the governor or any other respectable Mormon ever utter a word against an honorable officer of the government? NO! The names of Washington, Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Jackson, Fillmore, and thousands of others, meritorious are held in honorable remembrance with us

Much of the most painful load of 'official grief' seems to have been the monopoly of a 'plurality of wives' as they term to express it. This was 'peculiarly hard upon the officers sent to preside there.' And still harder must it force itself upon the contemplated calculator of sensitive affection, when he is informed that there was not a bawdy house in this territory, etc.¹⁷

In August, 1852, Brother Phelps was again elected to the Utah Legislature as a representative from Salt Lake county. During this term of office he served on a committee on education and election. He was elected to this same office during the subsequent years of 1853-57 inclusive.¹⁸

It is interesting to note that during the year of 1857 and 1864 he also served as chaplain in the lower house,¹⁹ and for several years, Brother Phelps acted as a notary public in Salt Lake City.²⁰

Early Activities as an Explorer

The first moment President Brigham Young set foot in Salt Lake Valley, he wanted to know about streams, lakes, canyons, river, and valleys of the territory. Therefore, he sent out expeditions in every

¹⁷The Collector, Vol. LVIII, No. 1, New York, December 1944, January, 1945, Whole No. 637, p. 4.

¹⁸Jensen, op. cit., p. 697.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Deseret News, January 18, 1860, Vol. 9, No. 47, p. 373.

direction to explore the country, that suitable places might be secured for future settlements.

Therefore, in November, 1849, a southern exploring company was commissioned by the governor and legislative assembly of "Deseret" to explore the southern country. The purpose of the expedition was to 'pass over the southern 'rim of the Great Basin,' to become acquainted with the character of the country beyond, and ascertain its availability as a place for settlement."²¹

On November 23, 1849, a meeting relative to exploring this area was called at Captain John Brown's on Cotton Wood. During the meeting Parley F. Pratt was voted president with W. W. Phelps as one of his counselors. In addition to this, the versatile Phelps was also unanimously elected to the position of Topographical Engineer.²²

The company had twelve wagons, one carriage; twenty-four yoke of cattle, thirty-eight horses and mules, an odometer to measure distances, one brass field piece, small arms, seven beeves, also one hundred and fifty pounds of flour to each man, besides crackers, bread and meat.²³

On November 24, 1849, W. W. Phelps wrote Brigham Young:

I drop you a word on the appearance of our start. Yesterday afternoon the company organized . . . We have nearly all our beef cattle and teams ready for a start and the company is in good spirits.

Should this weather continue severe the Bishop will have to render my family a little assistance for wood. Pray for us and we will for you.²⁴

²¹ Roberts, op. cit., p. 485.

²² Carter, op. cit., p. 198.

²³ Roberts, loc. cit.

²⁴ Phelps' file, op. cit., November 24, 1849.

Thus, with a company of picked men, forty-seven in number, they started out to explore southern Utah. The following is a brief summary of their travels:

Proceeding southward they arrived at the Little Salt Lake Valley. Here the party divided into two groups, one portion exploring in and about this region while the other, under Pratt's direct supervision, continued south.

Continuing on further south, the Pratt division followed Ash Creek on down to the Rio Virgin and intersecting it at a point fourteen miles below the Rim of the Basin. Crossing the river here, they proceeded on down stream to the junction with the Santa Clara. Here the party decided to go no further, but turned up the Clara Valley because of limited food supply--jaded teams and unpromising country. There was nothing but moderate climate to favor settlement in this country south of Cedar Valley. The whole area seemed desolate, parched and decidedly uninviting.

The party passed on, camping for the night on January 1, 1850, two miles above the junction. Taking up the march the next day, they passed through the Mountain Meadows, and joined their companions in the Little Salt Lake Valley.

The reunited party then started homeward, a distance of practically two hundred fifty miles. The snow as deep -- the weather cold, with temperatures ranging to 20° below zero. Not only were the animals weakened from lack of feed, but provisions were limited for the men as well.

Throughout the journey, William Wines Phelps displayed his usual versatile ability by taking a most active part in every important matter.

. . . . When the expedition was overtaken by snow storms, Brother Phelps was among those who were frequently sent ahead to break the road. . . .

. . . . Also, together with Dan Jones, he made astronomical observations in regard to latitude, longitude, etc. . . .²⁶

As an example of this, on August 24, 1849, Brother Phelps ascended to the top of Mount Nebo, south of Utah Valley, to make such scientific observations.²⁷

²⁵ Joseph William Olsen, Biography of Erastus Snow (Unpublished Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1935,) pp. 85-86.

²⁶ Jensen, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 696.

²⁷ Jensen, Church Chronology, op. cit., p. 35.

W. W. Phelps had the spirit of a pioneer, and later on in life made many short excursions. On one occasion he wrote to the Deseret News:

Mr. Editor: -- Having just returned from a short pioneer excursion among the mountains and canyons east, I thought I would speak of it for the benefit of spreading Mormonism. Mr. Rhoads and myself left the city on Saturday, the 29th. ult., and by way of the "little mountain," passed John Killian's, Lamb's mill, the sacred spot where Mr. Dixon and Quail were killed by the Indians in the summer of '53, and camped at the foot of Parley's Park, about 3 miles north of S. Snider's mills, 22 miles from the city; good grass and water, and a splendid appearance of timber fore and aft; on the west, the mountains, however, look ancient though not as high as the Wasatch on the east of our Valley. They have wrinkles, by and by, and if they were 3,000 years old when they had the first wrinkle, and then produced another wrinkle for every thousand years, there must be some "old mountains," for we saw several with as much as three wrinkles.

On the 30th we passed east, leaving Mr. Snider's to the west. He has a fine range for stock, and we observed quite a large herd, fat and fine, in the midst of the goodly pasture so luxuriantly prepared by the Lord. About three miles east of this range, we came to another very fine prospect for grazing and hay on Silver creek -- we never saw a better, and the creek is as beautiful as the waters of Eden. From this place we made the best way we could north easterly among hills and canyons to the Weber; country very rough, though the hills and mountains, during the way, were well covered with bunch grass and prickly pears, some of which were quite religious, being founded on a rock.

We struck the Weber some 12 or 15 miles south of the states' road crossing, and after going up some 4 or 5 miles at the junction of the east and south forks, we came to another fair sight for grazing. We stopped for the night where the south fork of Weber enters the "grand pass," north of Provo about 3 miles. We had already left some fine antelope, and as we were shaping our course down Provo west, we discovered what we at first thought were two Indian ponies, but on nearing them, found they were an excellent span of grizzly bears. Being not on recers, we were compelled to let them live their religion, which they did Mormon fashion, and fled from their friends to the mountains to save themselves from being loved to death. We saw several flocks of sage hens and antelope, and a few prairie hens.

We next shaped our course over the mountains west, a mile or two north of the Provo, and as we ascended, on looking back to the east, plenty of timbered hills and mountains spread their

yellow, red and green foliage before us, and about twenty miles in the distance, between Provo and Weber head waters, was a grand space for another "fat valley of Ephraim."

We passed on seven or eight miles and descended into a small valley full of Buffalo Bones, about a mile north of Provo; we called it Buffalo Valley. Just as we came in sight of this valley we discovered a large gentile fox with a neighboring sege hen in his mouth, imitating the christian world, one nation devouring another. We turned north and passed over the divide into Silver creek valley, and at night camped about two miles north of Snider's mills. There was a severe frost, the first we were plagued with. We saw a stump of a petrined tree about 3 feet in diameter.

We took P. P. Pratt's road down big canyon on our way home, and think it will need considerable labor to make it even a passable road. The distance from the city to the "grand pass" is about 50 miles, the way we returned; the northern route would be more.

Respectfully, &c,
/s/ W. W. Phelps²⁸

Early Educational Activities

Few men in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have been more ardent supporters of education than William Wines Phelps. As early as January 24, 1849, W. W. Phelps was using his home for a school room.²⁹

On February 28, 1850, in less than two years subsequent to W. W. Phelps' entry into the valley, the legislature of Deseret passed an ordinance incorporating the University of the State of Deseret. Salt Lake City was designated as the location of the institution, and thus was launched the first university west of the Missouri River.

The control of the university was to be in the hands of a chancellor and twelve regents. These officials were to be elected annually

²⁸ Deseret News, Oct. 3, 1844, Vol. 5, p. 261.

²⁹ "Journal History," January 24, 1849.

by the joint vote of both houses of the general assembly of the State of Deseret. During the same session of the legislature in which the ordinance of incorporation was passed, W. W. Phelps was appointed a member of the board of regents.³⁰ Concerning the men that composed the regents and chancellor, Thomas Romney writes:

. . . . It would be difficult to get together on any frontier a finer group of men to fill such a position of trust. Several of them were graduates of colleges, and all were distinguished for their high mental qualities and splendid judgment in the practical affairs of life³¹

The educational purposes of the new university were well expressed by William W. Phelps in 1850, when he wrote:

The world of science was to be revolutionized, the theories of gravitation, repulsion, and attraction overthrown, the motion of atoms, whether single or in mass, being ascribed to the all pervading presence of the holy spirit. The planetary systems were to be rearranged, their number and relations modified.³²

W. W. Phelps also gave an interesting speech on the anniversary of the entrance of the pioneers into the valley, on July 24, 1857; concerning the board of regents and the purpose of the university he said:

The valley teems with health and happiness, peace and joy, and like the star-spangled heavens after a storm, the Great Basin is sprinkled with the life glowing habitations of heaven's noblemen.

But this is not all; in the brief rise of this State, or as is now the case, Territory, to a place in annals of the General Government, this Board of Regents, of which I have the

³⁰Thomas C. Romney, The State of Deseret (Thesis for Doctorate Degree, University of California, 1924. Typewritten copy at Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah), p. 225.

³¹Ibid.

³²McNiff, op. cit., p. 52.

honor to be a member, has been brought to being, to manage the efforts of the newly-chartered University of Deseret, by the common consent of a generous great-hearted people. . . .

But what can this Board do? Do! Yes; do! Do good, and revolutionize the science of a purse-proud generation. All the language, all the books, and all the philosophy of man must fall with Babylon the great, and like a bubble bursting upon the water, leave no trace behind. Of what use, to the great mass of mankind are the highest institutions of the civilized world? Of the same use that the net is to the spider, the gun to the hunter, and the fire to the stubble. The prisoners of time and eternity, whenever they come to a knowledge of the truth, will learn that bogus philosophy, bogus religion, and bogus hopes, stole their reputation in life, and left them in poverty, death, darkness, and despair. In the like condition now groan the inhabitants of the Luciferian reign: **THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, THE VOICE OF THE DEVIL!**

Here then we stop, and turn to the University of Deseret for more light and better wisdom; beseeching this board, the Lord's anointed, the elders of Israel, and the whole church, with one consent, to pray the Lord, our Heavenly Father, to send down the regents from the great University of Perfection, as he did to Noah, Moses, and others, to unfold unto his servants the principles of wisdom, philosophy, and science, which are TRUTH --- while his elders gather the earthly crumbs of science the mouldering specimens of art, the tarnished gems of fame, now buried among the tombs of fallen greatness, from the four quarters of the globe, that his people may prepare themselves for the great revelation and restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the worlds began. . . .

Here, while the earth is preparing for her end, let children be taught to honor God and their parents from the cradle to the grave, and walk in the paths marked out by Jehovah, before the foundation of the world, to bring the children of men into his presence, that their good deeds may shine before heaven and the holy angels, like the sun light upon the grass of the field and the leaves of the forest. Here let the sacred rights of matrimony, like the pure love of God, "spread undivided and operate unspent," until the children of Abraham become as numerous as the stars above, or the sands below; that from the resurrection, the "joint heirs of Jesus Christ" may do the works that their Father did, till each in the center of his own glory may reign in his own eternity--
A GOD.

FATHERS IN ISRAEL! Deseret University speaks to you in the name of the Lord; train up your children in the principles of holiness, that they may take the kingdom from your shoulders and bear it triumphantly before this generation with clear hands

and pure hearts.

MOTHERS IN ISRAEL! A word to you may not be amiss. As knowledge was opened to the understanding of men in the flesh, through the first act of your own choice, so let the last one be, to TEACH children, and daughters especially, to watch as well as pray, and beware of the leaven of the Gentiles! Let it be a sacred motto: She that marries out of the Church, or without the Priesthood, marries for hell for there is neither "marrying nor giving in marriage" in the resurrection! The light from the University will teach you better than to expect "figs from thorns, or grapes from thistles."

SONS OF ZION! The world waits for your wild oats with pockets full of gold; go to the University, and there learn that union is strength, and knowledge is power, and that the glory of God as far exceeds the fame of this earth, as the light of the sun does the glimmer of a candle. Let your motto be, "Eternal lives."

DAUGHTERS OF ZION! Let your virtue adorn you; and go into the house of the Lord, and receive the keys, which unlock a glory more precious than the world ever had; and prepare for an exaltation among the nobles of heaven. Let your names go down in the archives of the University as gems for the sanctified to rejoice over in eternity.

And these little boys and girls shall not be passed without notice; the coming glory of Israel sparkles in your bright eyes; and the untold renown of Zion already perches on your flaxen heads. May God give you a double portion of His spirit to school your minds to live like men and women, die the death of the righteous and hear the welcome plaudit: "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of the Lord". . . .³³

On November 11, 1850, the University of Deseret, under title "Parent School," was opened under the direction of Chancellor Orson Spencer with W. W. Phelps and Orson Pratt as teachers.³⁴

The Parent School was successfully operated in the council house under the tuition of Brothers Spencer and Phelps. The design of the school was to prepare its pupils to become teachers, and for all who desired to advance in the higher branches of education. It was also designed

³³ Millennial Star, Oct. 15, 1857, Vol. XIII, No. 20, pp. 303-312.

³⁴ Andrew L. Neff, History of Utah, 1847-69 (Salt Lake City, Deseret News, 1940), p. 353.

that the Parent School would be open continually.³⁵

The Deseret News records an interesting account concerning the activities of Brother Phelps and the Parent School on May Day, (May 17), 1851:

One of the most soul-stirring events of our peace-making city, was on May Day. As usual, the day seemed to be fitted for the joyful occasion, and both passed off pleasantly. Several parties of young ladies, beautifully attired in white, walked our streets, and visited the canyons, (the free gardens of the mountains,) to decorate themselves with garlands of flowers, and evergreen sprigs, and reverently set the queen; for they are all queens who do the will of God: so that a little praise cannot be misapplied to such goodly models of the rising Deseretians. We have not time, nor space, to give a synopsis of each party's doings through the day, but must content ourselves with a brief sketch of what graced the scholars of the Parent School of the University of the Great Basin of the Rocky Mountains.

At about four p.m. Chancellor Spencer and Regent Phelps met the young ladies, (who had visited the free gardens of the mountains in the forepart of the day for the "natural embellishments" which gave zest to the beautiful scene,) and escorted them, singing by the way, from the council house to Mrs. Peck's assembly room, where they met the male members of said school, who had previously assembled for the recreation of the evening. A collation, or lady fare, good enough for kings and queens graced the table, amid the flowerpots, bouquets, festoons, and fragrance of this hall of hilarity; -- and, after thanks were tendered, by Mr. Phelps, to our Father in the heavens, was partaken with an air of satisfaction, -- a dignity of manners, -- and a serenity of sobriety -- rarely witnessed at BELLES LETICES FESTIVALS.

A very appropriate prayer was made by Chancellor Spencer; next followed a short address by Regent Phelps, setting forth the blessings of union, confidence in God, and the happy results of instructions, and giving a sketch of the historical origin of "April Fool," and "May Day." The former appears from the fact, the Romans, at first, lacking wives, enticed the surrounding Sabians to bring in their families and witness their plays, feasts, and concerts on the first of April -- then stole their girls and made wives of them, saying, "You're fooled."

In the absence of other history, "May Day" might arise from the fact that Jephthah's daughter went with her maidens into the mountains about this time of year to mourn and dance preparatory to her being sacrificed to fulfill her father's vow

and after this, the maidens of Israel made it a yearly custom to go and do likewise; unto which assemblage the Benjaminites resorted to obtain wives, when they had been chastened with the loss of their women by war. What causes the young ladies to resort to the canyons and mountains as they did anciently? --Ah! my young friends! as formerly, so now: They are actuated by the spirit that is in them!

Chancellor Spencer continued, saying: if these allusions to ancient practices were not exactly the facts for this occasion, they argued that it was right to marry, and multiply, and fill up the earth; that a tribe might not be blotted out, it was allowable in Israel to take a spoil of the maidens that danced upon the mountains, and make wives of them. Though the Romans might have cried "Fooled!" nobody but Satan was fooled, -- for none but Satan and his adherents disregard the sacred rights of matrimony, and corrupt their way on the earth. It is not fooling to marry, but honoring the commandments of the Lord our God. Truly did Brother Phelps say, -- It is the Spirit in Them, that causes them to imitate a good example; and it will ever be the Spirit in Us that will cause us to do good, and act good, and honor God, whether it be in singing, praying, or praising Him in the dance.

After his remarks were concluded the animating music and the social dance, modified by a gentle spirit through the room, seemed to whisper: -- Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren, or young Saints, to dance together in unity.

A sweet incense of joy, and a pleasing sensation of peace pervaded the party through every performance of the day, -- whether singing, dancing, or devotion; yea, it passed off as sweetly as the harmony of the heavenly hosts. It was an anniversary, that, in righteousness, may be a pattern for other ages. Not a drop of tea, coffee, beer, wine, or strong drink, was drunk; not a word of profane, wanton, or uncivil language was heard from anyone, and all left at an early hour, well satisfied with the first University dance of Deseret.³⁶

In addition to his duties as teacher, Brother Phelps as one of the regents, was assigned to visit all the wards in Salt Lake City and occasionally he was given other specific school assignments.³⁷

³⁶ Deseret News, May 17, 1851, Vol. 1, No. 33, pp. 261-62.

³⁷ John Clifton Loffit, The History of Public Education in Utah, (Provo, Utah, 1946), pp. 47-48.

W. W. Phelps was especially interested in education in languages and phonetics. At one time, he, Brother Willard Richards, and others, met to discuss the propriety of studying the Indian languages and publishing them in a book form.³⁸ Although this was never accomplished, a committee was formed in 1853, in Salt Lake City, to devise an alphabet that would permit the spelling of a word according to sound.³⁹ Brother Phelps and Orson Pratt devised the new alphabet,⁴⁰ although Remy and Brenchley inform us that "the idea originated with W. W. Phelps" and that "it was he who worked out the letters."⁴¹ Each character in the Deseret alphabet represented a syllable of the English language, which necessitated using thirty-eight characters.⁴²

The announcement of this project appeared in the Deseret News, January 19, 1854. It stated:

The board of regents (of University of Deseret), in company with the governor and heads of departments, have adopted a new alphabet, consisting of thirty-eight characters -- the Board have held frequent sittings this winter, with the sanguine hope of simplifying the English language and especially its orthography. After many fruitless attempts to render the common alphabet of the day subservient to their purpose, they found it expedient to invent an entirely new and original set of characters.

The News article added: "that the orthography of the language will be so abridged that an ordinary writer can probably write one hund-

³⁸"Journal History," July 31, 1853.

³⁹Ashton, op. cit., p. 374.

⁴⁰McNiff, op. cit., p. 75.

⁴¹Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, A Journey to Great Salt Lake City (Printed by John Edward Taylor, Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1861), pp. 185-86.

⁴²McNiff, loc. cit.

⁴³Ashton, op. cit., p. 184.

red words a minute with ease, and consequently report the speech of a common speaker without much difficulty."⁴⁴

Thus, more than anyone else, Brother Phelps was continually associated with the Deseret alphabet chapter in Mormon history. He helped devise it, assisted in preparing two primers by which the new system was introduced in classes in school and church gatherings, and in the public press.⁴⁵

The Deseret Almanac

One of the enterprises which made the name of the versatile Phelps famous in early Utah days was the publication of his "Deseret Almanac."⁴⁶

It is interesting to note that Brother Phelps had written down, by hand, certain astronomical observations suitable for the latitude and longitude of various places while crossing the plains. (See illustration, p. 156).

After settling in the Great Salt Lake Valley, he continued his observations accompanied with other valuable information in the published form of the "Deseret Almanac." The first edition of this meritorious publication was issued from the press in 1851, and was small enough to hide in the palm of the hand. Brother Phelps' first almanac contained sixteen pages, plus a calendar for the year, giving Deseret's farmers the times of sun risings, settings, and moon changes. In addition to this, the little

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 374.

⁴⁶ Jensen, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 696.

Meteorological Journal for Winter Quarters,
near Caswell Bluff. Lat. 41° 18' N. Long. 20° W.
Dec. 18 27.

Day	Wind	Ther. (max)	Ther. (min)	Wind	Ther. (max)	Ther. (min)	Ther. (max)		Ther. (min)		Remarks	
							Bar	Wind	Bar	Wind		
1	W	22	12	S	50	39	Rainy	W	39	Rainy	S.W.	more than inch of rain
2	T	22	12	N	35	19	cloudy	N	19	cloudy	N	
3	F	4	4	S	35	31	cloudy	S	31	cloudy	N	
4	S	27	12	N	35	32	clear	N	32	clear	N	
5	C	16	12	N	30	27	clear	S	27	clear	S	
6	M	33	12	S	49	46	clear	S	46	clear	S	Snow on 3 P.M.
7	T	30	12	N.E.	20	17	cloudy	N.E.	17	cloudy	N.E.	
8	M	5	12	N	28	21	hazy	S.W.	21	hazy	S	snow fell 2 1/2 inches
9	T	24	12	S	34	25	cloudy	S	25	cloudy	S	
10	F	11	12	S.W.	36	12	cloudy	S	12	cloudy	S	
11	S	14	12	S	40	22	hazy	S	22	hazy	S	
12	C	16	12	N	18	10	clear	N	10	clear	N	
13	M	9	12	N.W.	20	6	clear	N.W.	6	clear	N.W.	2 feet snow 10 P.M.
14	T	2	12	S.E.	26	19	clear	S	19	clear	S.W.	
15	W	15	12	N	34	27	clear	N	27	clear	N.E.	light wind
16	T	5	12	N	30	20	clear	W	20	clear	N	
17	F	10	12	W	32	30	clear	S	30	clear	S	
18	S	15	12	W	39	37	hazy	S	37	clear	N.W.	high wind in P.M.
19	C	10	12	N	25	32	hazy	W	32	clear	N.W.	coldest day
20	M	3	12	N	12	8	clear	N	8	clear	N	full moon 4 1/2 P.M.
21	T	10	12	S	39	30	hazy	W	30	hazy	N	
22	M	20	12	S	39	29	clear	W	29	clear	W	
23	T	32	12	N	31	28	clear	W	28	clear	N	light snow 1/2 inch
24	F	20	12	N.E.	20	15	clear	N	15	clear	N	coldest day
25	S	10	12	N	8	3	clear	W	3	clear	N.W.	
26	C	6	12	S	27	23	hazy	S	23	cloudy	S	
27	M	23	12	N	37	36	clear	N.W.	36	clear	S	
28	T	25	12	S	39	37	hazy	S	37	hazy	S	warm day & foggy
29	F	40	12	S	46	40	hazy	S	40	hazy	S	foggy
30	M	28	12	S	40	37	cloudy	S.E.	37	cloudy	S.E.	snow squall
31	T	34	12	N	36	32	cloudy	N	32	cloudy	N	

Taken by W. W. Phelps
with the use of Farkner's
Thermometer.

booklets included postal information, fables, figures on the national debt, poems, tables, and philosophy.⁴⁷ For example, the following extract from his 1854 edition states:

Three things good Mormon wives should be like, and NOT like:

FIRST: Like a snail, neat within her house,
And not like a snail, carry all upon her back.
SECOND: Like an echo, speak when spoken to,
And not like an echo, always have the last word.
THIRD: Like a town clock, keep time,
But not like a town clock, alarm all the town.
DUTY: Every one mind his own business.
LAW: Do as you would be done by.
RELIGION: Save thyself first, then thy friends.
GOSPEL: When compelled to give your coat, throw in your cloak
also; and if urged a mile, go two. Such a course
gives more power than rusty swords, musty books, or
haughty looks.

Vice often borrows a rich man's cloak, and pays for it.
Virtue wanders in poverty and keeps a good name.
Prosperity has as many "tight fits" as poverty.

All are anxious to get treasure in this world, with the
truth before their eyes. -- **IT MUST BE LEFT. SO WE GO?** brag-
ging of wisdom, and showing off our folly to the angels that
watch us.

Every foreigner should apply to a court of record where he
resides in the Territory, according to the Laws of Congress,
and **BE NATURALIZED**. Who knows what he may be wanted for? "Be
ye always ready."

-- **DESERTER ALMANAC 1854**
W. W. Phelps, K. J. ⁴⁸
W. Richards, Printer

After visiting William W. Phelps, Remy and Brechley wrote:

To give to every man his due, we ought to say
W. W. Phelps, one of the regents of the University, . . . is
an intellectual point of view, is one of the most singular
persons in Utah, and possibly also the most erudite, if not
the really best informed. The eccentricity of his manners,

⁴⁷ Phelps' Almanacs, LDS Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake
City, Utah, 1854 edition.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

the singularity of his character, the originality of his ideas, the suppleness of his opinions, the variety of his aptitudes it is he who edits the 'Deseret Almanac' and who, in this capacity, foretells rain and fine weather, calculates the risings and settings of the sun for Utah and its territory. He is the author of a great number of poems and of several fables⁴⁹

In connection with the "Almanac" Richard Burton wrote:

. . . . Besides Hebrew and other linguistic studies, the judge is a meteorologist, and has been engaged for some years in observations upon the climate of the Territory. An old editor at Independence, he now superintends the Utah Almanac, and gave me a copy for the year 1860, "being the 31st year of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." It is a small duodecimo, creditably printed by Mr. J. M'Knight, Utah, and contains thirty-two pages. The contents are usual tables of days, sunrises, sunsets, eclipses, etc., with advertisements on the alternate pages; and it ends with the denominations and value of gold and silver coins, original poetry, "scientific" notes concerning the morning and evening stars, a list of the United States officers at Utah, the number of the planets and asteroids, diarrhea, and "moral poetry," and an explanation of the word "almanac," concluding with the following observation:

"A person without an almanac is somewhat like a ship at sea without a compass; he never knows what to do nor when to do it."

"So Mormon, other sects, and Quaker,
Buy Almanacs, and pay the maker.--K.J."

The only signs of sanctity are in the events appended to the days of the week; they naturally record the dates of local interest, and the births and deaths of prophets, and patriarchs, presidents and apostles. Under the head of "Time," however, some novel information is provided for the benefit of the benighted chronologist.

Time.-- There is a great mystery about time as recorded in the Bible. Authors differ as to what length of time this world has occupied since it came into being. Add 4004 to 1860, and we have 5864 years.

Again, some authors allow, before the birth of the Savior, 5509 years, which, added to 1860, gives 7369 years since the beginning.

The book of Abraham, as translated by Joseph Smith, gives

⁴⁹Ramy and Breckley, loc. cit.

7000 years for the creation by the gods, one day of the Lord being a thousand years of man's time, or a day in Kolob. This important revelation of 7000 years at first shows 5960 years since the transgression of Adam and Eve, and 40 years to the next 'day of rest,' if the year 1900 commences the return of the 'ten tribes,' and the first resurrection; or 13,000 years since the gods said, "Let there be light and there was light," so that the fourteen thousandth year will be the second Sabbath since creation.

A day of the Moon is nearly thirty of our days, or more than ten thousand of earth's time. Verily, verily,

"Man knows but little,
Nor knows that little right."⁵⁰

Early Activities as a Lawyer

The Prophet Joseph Smith at one time said to W. W. Phelps:

. . . you should be a lawyer and understand law, and the time will come when I shall not need to say to you, Thus and thus is the law; for you shall know it.⁵¹

As it was characteristic of W. W. Phelps to always follow the advice of the young Prophet, it was not surprising to discover that he practiced law during the early pioneer days in Utah. Hosea Stout records as early as August 17, 1850, that:

. . . The passenger Train of Glenn & Co., which arrived here on Sunday last had entirely split up and commenced suit against the proprietors for failing to take them to the mines as stipulated. The whole Train is in the utmost confusion while some are running off with part of the Stock &c while I was employed as council on the part of the proprietors and W. W. Phelps on the part of the passengers.⁵²

However, since the Territory of Utah did not recognize the State of Deseret as a legal government, all lawyers had to be re-admitted to the bar. As a consequence, on October 7, 1851, W. W. Phelps was admitted

⁵⁰ Burton, op. cit., pp. 253-54.

⁵¹ Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 299-300.

⁵² Diary of Hosea Stout, op. cit., Aug. 17, 1850, Vol. V, p. 359.

to the bar and sworn into office as a "councillor and attorney at law and solicitor in chancery."⁵³

The famous Howard Egan case came up on October 17, 1851, before Judge Snow's court.⁵⁴ Andrew Neff writes concerning this trial:

Highly sensational was the murder case awaiting the October session of Judge Snow's court, 1851. Howard Egan, one of the Pioneer band, returned from California to find that his wife had been seduced by James Monroe, formerly a Mormon. Egan, a typical frontiersman, proceeded eastward to settle the score, as best he could, by putting a bullet through the wrongdoer, who was returning with a train of merchandise for John and Enoch Reese. The homicide occurred in September of 1851. . . .⁵⁵

During the ensuing trial, the United States Attorney, Seth M. Blair, conducted the prosecution while Egan was defended by W. W. Phelps, and George A. Smith.⁵⁶

It is interesting to note that William W. Phelps began the arguments for the defense, (following Blair who made the first plea for the prosecution) and used the Bible history, Homer, and Virgil, in addition to a large pile of law books and precedents to "show that Egan was justified in his act." W. W. Phelps and George A. Smith won their case and Egan was declared not guilty.⁵⁷

Throughout the early Utah period, Brother Phelps continued to

⁵³ Ibid., October 8, 1851, p. 416.

⁵⁴ Ibid., October 17, 1851, pp. 417-418.

⁵⁵ Neff, op. cit., p. 193.

⁵⁶ Diary of Hosea Stout, op. cit., October 17, 1851, p. 417.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 418.

defend the brethren in their legal rights.⁵⁸

Early Activities in Meteorology and Astronomy

As early as 1851, Brother Phelps was furnishing the Deseret News with weather and astronomical observations. For example, in the February 8, 1851, issue, Editor W. Richards published the following:

. . . . I will say a few words upon the zodiac and the signs, which occasionally hang round the 'Man in the Moon' in the Almanac, to the wonder and gratification of her who is about to wean the child; or him who regards the signs of the times in his flocks and herds

All ready. The word Zodiac is of Greek origin, and besides a ring in the heavens, means a collection of animals, or a painting of animals; undoubtedly such as torment the Almanacs, and give the Dutch such a hatred to "spooks." The Egyptians, and Babylonians invented the signs, and in all probability, for the purpose of matching Abraham, who promulgated the pure science of the heavens. One strong reason in favor of the signs is, they are the exact resemblance of the fundamental belief of sectarian religion -- "A God without body, parts or passions, beyond the bounds of time or space;" -- for the constellations, where these signs were located, are "fixed stars," or suns; to arrive at which many astronomers have conjectured that a cannon ball, flying at the rate of a mile in eight seconds, would require centuries of time. But to make the matter plainer: look with the naked eye, or with a telescope, about seven in the evening, in the month of February, and you will discover a little west of the meridian and south of the zenith, two small stars called Aries; but they are a short distance westward of the seven stars; a little to the northeast of the seven stars, is Taurus, the bull's eye; still further northeast, are "Castor and Pollus" in Gemini, and so on, but the awful signs are not there; they have fallen back 30 degrees: so that the Egyptian Rem, if he is ever found, will be found where the fish swim off in the upper deep.

The moon is the particular controller of the signs, according to Heathen, Egyptian, and Gentile mythology, for she passes under the fixed stars, and round her circuit in 27 days, 7 hours, 43 minutes, and 5 seconds, which, if she went on her course regular, would occupy, for the 12 signs, 2 days, 6 hours, 38 minutes, and 37 1-2 seconds; but as the "world rolls on her wings," too, she does not change only once in 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 3 seconds, and will not occupy the same place for 18 years, 338 days, and 9 hours. As she is only 240,000 miles from

⁵⁸ Jensen, op. cit., p. 696.

the earth, the influence of the nearest fixed star, must be some time in travelling down, even if it came as swift as light, and its path, would be as winding as a hemlock rail, or the worm of a still. The nearest "fixed star," or constellation, for the pictures in the Almanac, are supposed to be about 20 trillions of miles from this earth; the sun is about 95 millions of miles, and what effect can either have over children and animals? Where are the heavenly scorpions; the universe virgins; the space boat of the waterman? The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. The retinue of worlds above, around, throughout the regions of infinity, have influence one with another, under the supervision of God the Father: -- but as to the petty influence of the signs, attraction and repulsion, as taught by the Literate, it is mockery. Man was created upright, but he has sought out so many inventions, he has lost the truth and gropes for the wall at noonday.

Children should be taught the true principles of the starry heavens. That there are eternities many; systems many, worlds many; heavens many; Lords many; Gods many, and peoples many; and that all are governed, directed and upheld in their eternities, centuries, years, courses, days, times and seasons, BY A GOD: And that, when a man of God, like Joshua, said to the sun and moon "stand still," the only obedience was in the angel that commanded, to do the will of God, independent of gravitation. More anon.

/s/ W. W. Phelps⁵⁹

Another example is found in the March 8, 1851, issue:

Again Doctor, I solicit a space in your columns, to say a few words upon "the weather," which is so wonderfully foretold by the almanac maker, or the printer's devil, in many almanacs, for the vexing consolation of fansers, travellers, and some visiting women. It cannot, at this time, be exactly told who first invented this kind of prophecy, but English sovereignty, and the Yankee nation have held it inasmuch repute as the subjects of a potentate to his word: -- THE KING CAN DO NO WRONG.

In addition to this kind of soothsaying, a large majority of mankind actually believe, that the moon holds an immense sway, at her changes, over the weather; and this serves to strengthen the almanac maker's or the printer devil's faith, or cunning, or calculations, in foretelling the hidden treasures of the weather, -- to the great gratification of a Christian, or enlightened world. The Christian, however, with his contemporary, Deist, believes that there are no gifts and prophecyings now;

⁵⁹Deseret News, February 8, 1851, Vol. I, No. 26, p. 202.

so that the saying of Jesus to the Jews applies to these weather prophets, first rate: "when it is evening, ye say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering: O ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky but ye cannot discern the signs of the times!"

As to the influences, supposed from the changes of the moon over the weather, a few words to common sense minds will suffice. Who does not know that every day over all the earth, where the sun's rays are not too oblique, all the beautiful varieties of a year, are in successful growth, and operation? The joyful spring; the rosy summer; the golden fall, and the hoary winter. For instance: now the sun is south of the equator, making every day, by degrees, the flower of spring before him; the glory and grace of summer around him; the fruit and fading of fall behind, with the glare and gloom of winter as a rear ward: so are the days of the year diversified; not by philosophy, religion, or men, but in the wisdom of all eternity.

Again: what effect has the moon upon the mountains of polar ice, while she rolls round her ring, or orbit, alternately two weeks above the horizon at the north pole, -- and two weeks at the south pole? Does the moon, as a kind of sergeant-at-arms, give France and Italy a beautiful, mild climate, and Canada a stormy, severe one in the same parallel of latitude? What ingenuity must the moon possess, to temper down the hot winds from the burning sands of Africa into soft breezes? And how are her silver glances thrown over the States, to give a continuity of rain through the summer, while the Great Basin is counterbalanced by months of clear weather? All that need be said, is, "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the traditions of men; and after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Now, I think if any one prophesies of the weather, he must be one of the devil's prophets; for Paul says the children of disobedience walk by the "prince of the power of air." And Jesus said to his disciples, -- "hereafter the prince of this world cometh, and he hath nothing with me."

Should any one ask, what is philosophy, after the traditions of men, &c--answer,--it is governing worlds and nations, by attraction and repulsion, according to gravitation, and making the moon and wise fools, control the weather, independent of Jehovah! -- and sulk off when the prediction fails, under the burlesque of reason; -- I only guessed at it.

When Jesus rebuked the wind, did he reprove his Father in the heavens, or find fault with himself for making the wind

boisterous? neither; if Satan is "prince of the power of the air," -- HE RAISED THE WIND. The wind blows when it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: and remember the wind brings the storms, not the moon.

I have witnessed more than six hundred changes of the moon in fifty years, during which time not less than ten thousand changes of weather have happened by night and by day, among which were snow in summer, and thunder showers in winter; and yet, before, and after all; when true philosophy, which is Truth, was consulted, I never found a man of this world, that knew what a day would bring forth, a year, a month, or a week ahead, unless revealed by the spirit of prophecy.

Some people talk of wet moons and dry ones; and what kind were those, when in old times, it rained not for the space of three years and six months? And what influence will the moon or the almanac makers have on the weather, when the four angels stand at the four corners of the earth, holding the winds till the servants of God are sealed? -- The secret of time is with God.

/s/ W. W. Phelps⁶⁰

On January 12, 1857, W. W. Phelps presented to the legislature a resolution creating the office of Superintendent of Meteorological observations. The resolution was accepted and Brother Phelps was appointed to fill the position.⁶¹

As Superintendent of Meteorological Observations, W. W. Phelps furnished monthly weather memorandums and meteoric phenomenon for the Deseret News. The following examples are indicative of his work:

On Saturday evening, the 12th inst., at a little after six, there appeared, coming from an easterly direction, an uncommonly bright meteor. It resembled a large sky-rocket, for it burst into a number of smaller globes of fire of indescribable grandeur, forming suddenly a serpentine stream of molten-like quicksilver, which, in glowing magnificence, writhed as a wounded snake over the city, and continued to ascend, growing

⁶⁰ Deseret News, March 8, 1851, Vol. I, No. 28, pp. 219-20.

⁶¹ Diary of Hosea Stout, op. cit., Jan. 12, 1857, Vol. VI, p. 395.

paler and paler, until, high in ether, it became a small twilight globe and vanished under the sign "aries."

No meteor so large; none so bright, lighting for a few moments the whole city; none so gorgeous, shining, and serpentine to life, has before appeared as the "signs" of the last days.

/s/ W. W. Phelps 62
Sup. Met. Ob.

The forepart of this month there appeared in the northern hemisphere, a comet of the size of a star of the second magnitude, pale as Mercury, with a little small tail We know nothing more of it; it maybe a railroad car of heaven carrying intelligences from one universe to another; or it may be a new world trying its speed to learn if it can run well; or it may be the comet of 1811, returning, but not near enough to show its magnificent splendor.

Some astronomers have raised the number of comets, which visit our solar system, as high as 700, but our idea is, that we may have had 700 visits from a much less number of comets in 6,000 years.

.

The inquisitive, and soothsayers are also full of speculations, as to this heavenly omen. At the birth of Jesus Christ the wise men saw his star in the east. That might have been a comet for it has never returned to tell of his second coming; for it never promised to. Before and after the revolutionary war, there was a comet. Before and after the War of 1812 there was a comet, and what if there should be a comet before and after the great restoration of Israel to mercy? -- Signs and wonders in the heavens are certainly promised in the holy scriptures. Hold on; the knowledge of man is vanity and darkness, but the wisdom of God is truth and light.

He that hath eyes to see let him see what a comet may bring forth, before he ventures his 'snap heap' of knowledge on guessing the sublime secret of a comet.

The word, comet, allowing all deference to the witty Greek theme Kome (hair) and the sedate opinion of Dr. Webster, from the Latin, Comets, "an opaque, spherical, solid body," &c. was anciently doubtless understood, from old Hebrew, Komaz etah, to mean, "a brilliant, passing globe."

/s/ W. W. Phelps 63
Supt. Met. Ob.

⁶² Deseret News, Nov. 16, 1859, Vol. 9, No. 37, p. 296.

⁶³ Ibid., March 31, 1858, Vol. 8, p. 127.

Mr. Editor: Some people have short memories, and I wish to check errors. Speaking of our cold winter thus far -- permit me to say that January 1848, (Sunday 9th) the thermometer stood at 11 degrees below zero at sunrise, and this year, the 9th, at sunrise, 4 degrees above having not been down to zero yet this month. The coldest day of the winter of 1848 was March 3, when the thermometer fell 15 degrees below zero, with a cold west wind.

By this year's Almanac it will be noticed that a great eclipse of the moon takes place on the morning of February 17th, more than one hour and a half total, in a high northern latitude, and who knows what the thermometer will be then? It will be seen that the sun, at that time is slow 14 minutes! If any watch the sun by the Almanac, they may learn in winter, when the sun runs slow the cold runs fast. Every Almanac reader, who is a farmer, should be his own weather gauge, by common observation, and keep a memorandum of important changes in the weather.

Yours,
/s/ W. W. Phelps⁶⁴

Other Early Miscellaneous Activities

W. W. Phelps became a prominent member of the Deseret Theological Institute when it was organized in Salt Lake City in 1855. He also became prominently associated with the "Deseret Horticultural Society" when it was organized the same year.⁶⁵

During the first meeting of the amateur Horticulturists on September 20, 1855, Brother Phelps rejoiced that they could see the fruit of the earth raised by themselves. He said, "In seven years from tonight we can compare with any fruit culturists on the earth."⁶⁶

In addition to this he attended the meetings of the "Universal Scientific Society"⁶⁷ and the "Polysophical Society" where he took an

⁶⁴Ibid., January 19, 1859, p. 198.

⁶⁵Jensen, op. cit., p. 697.

⁶⁶Deseret News, September 14, 1855, Vol. 5, p. 238.

⁶⁷Diary of Samuel W. Richards, 1839-1874, copied by the BYU Library, 1950-51, p. 210.

*B. Young,**Office*

NO. 2.

DESERET ALMANAC,

FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD,

1852:

BEING LEAP YEAR, AND AFTER THE 6TH OF APRIL, THE 23RD,
 YEAR OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER
 DAY SAINTS; AND THE SECOND OF THE LAST
 HALF CENTURY OF THIS DISPENSATION:

~~~~~  
 By W. W. Phelps, K. J.

~~~~~  
 CALCULATED FOR LATITUDE 40° 45' N. AND LONGITUDE 111° 26' W.,

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY:

ACCOMPANIED WITH MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS, &c.

~~~~~  
 W. RICHARDS, PRINTER;

G.S.L.CITY, U.T.

active part and was a popular speaker.<sup>68</sup>

W. W. Phelps was also a contributor in prose and verse to the Deseret News and other church publications throughout the United States, including the Millennial Star published in England.

One interesting contribution to the Deseret News was entitled "Appellations."

Mr. Editor: -- In answer to the inquiry why the "appellations" for each of the "Twelve," added to fill vacancies, when members have been selected as Presidents, or have fallen away, have not been published? I answer, here they are, -- old and new, as the spirit prompts me: --

#### PRESIDENCY

Brigham Young, the Lion of the Lord,  
Heber C. Kimball, the Herald of Grace  
Willard Richards, the Keeper of the Rolls.

#### THE TWELVE

Orson Hyde, the Olive-branch of Israel  
Parley F. Pratt, the Archer of Paradise  
Orson Pratt, the Gauge of Philosophy  
Wilford Woodruff, the Banner of the Gospel  
John Taylor, the Champion of Right  
George A. Smith, the Entablature of Truth  
Amasa Lyman, the Aegis of Justice  
Ezra T. Benson, the Helmet of Righteousness  
Charles C. Rich, the Measuring Rule of Patience  
Lorenzo Snow, the Mirror of Hope  
Erastus Snow, the Evergreen Sprig of the Mountain  
Franklin D. Richards, the Spy-glass of Faith

On these hang the law and the prophets for this dispensation, -- and may our Father bless them -- to do good, while and where good can be administered to the heirs of salvation, -- for I calculate to be "a little book open," as long as truth is needed in the flesh, and afterwards: amen.

/s/ W. W. Phelps<sup>69</sup>

Another interesting article appeared in the "Mormon" in New York City:

---

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>69</sup>Deseret News, March 8, 1851, Vol. 1, No. 28, p. 221.

We have received the following from our old friend Judge Phelps. It is a literary curiosity and much like the man. Who does not know or has not heard of Judge Phelps? If they have not they are behind the age and need enlightning on this subject. Come, judge, let the quill wheel run and send us more of it.

Our trials, while Uncle Sam's waiters camped in the city were like fire in the leaves of a forest in a dry time blazing for a conflagration, every time the wind blew; but God the friend of faith, union, goodness, love, joy, perseverence, mercy, and fortitude, helped us to turn all things to his glory, and here we are, in the midst of this wicked and crooked generation, a light unto the Gentiles and a flaming flame to the house of Israel.

We had a mild winter and good preaching; and I think I can say Zion prospers; I shall try to help you all I can in the days of Nauvoo, when the old quill wheel was running, . . . .<sup>70</sup>

During this period of his life, Brother Phelps was well known for his knowledge of ancient languages, including Hebrew. This is illustrated by two articles; one in the Deseret News states:

Honorable George Peacock, of Manti, has exhibited in our office an old copper coin, recently found by some explorer or hunter on the Colorado river, on both sides of which are hieroglyphics or characters and Hebrew coin letters. Not being one of the "learned," we submitted it to Professor Phelps, who has given us the following as literal translation of the characters. One side reads, according to the rendition:

"The king, Hagagadonihah, over the kingdom near the sea west, sends to all greeting: one senine."

On the other side:

"In the 95th year of the Kingdom of Christ, 9th year of my reign: Peace and life."

Mottos: "Weapon to weapon: Life for life."

The coin is 1765 years old; and is evidently a Nephite senine of farthing, as mentioned in the fifth chapter of second Nephi, in the Book of Mormon -- English edition. It is about the size of an English farthing. The numerals are plain Arabic figures.<sup>71</sup>

The other example is found in the Journal History. It reads:

<sup>70</sup>"Journal History," May 1, 1855.

<sup>71</sup>Deseret News, Dec. 12, 1860, Vol. 10, No. 41, p. 321.

I have taken some pains to translate literally, the characters or imitation of old Hebrew letters you presented to me, said to be found in Newark, Ohio. It is all one of the public whether they are a modern discovery of ancient knowledge or a present devised "secret."

Aside from the boasted learning of the age, allowing the second verb in Hebrew to mean -- endow, inspire, sanctify or consecrate, and the noun it governs to mean, the 'anointed' or holy priests; we have this elegant and perfect revelation -- "The law of the Lord binds the Lord to inspire the anointed to rule the earth."

If the foregoing be an ancient relic, and I see nothing to contradict it, I presume it was deposited there by the Nephites more than 1600 years ago, or soon after the crucifixion of our Savior. The Book of Mormon unravels all such mysteries and gives the necessary information relative to the children of Israel, who settled the continent of North and South America  
 . . . .

W. W. Phelps was a familiar figure and active participant during local celebrations and other occasions. He was noted for his toasts given at July 4th and 24th, celebrations from which the following extracts were taken:

The United States -- Faithful -- the patriot family increases.  
 -- But prodigal, -- like falling glass they break to pieces.

The three main pillars -- Light, Love, and Liberty forever.

The Territory of Utah -- The idol of his Father in good habits.

Independence -- It costs blood, who wishes to barter it for gold?

Governor Young -- He is what he is and the world knows it.  
 'All is well.'

The Heroes of '76 -- They knocked, and a door opened which no man was able to shut.

The Several States -- 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?'

The Mormon Battalion -- They stooped to conquer a 'few' with the sword, but rose to captivate 'many' with truth.

---

<sup>72</sup>"Journal History," October 9, 1860.

Captain Howard Stensbury -- Good to him that thinks good.  
He honor'd the Mormons; they honor him.<sup>73</sup>

The United States -- From many one; from one many. --

The Several States -- United, they're hailed as the chief --  
divided, disgraced as a thief.

The Law of the Land -- Should be written in the hearts of  
the people by inspiration.

Learning -- Happy the people that get wisdom, for they  
shall find grace on earth, and glory in heaven.

The Flag of our Union -- We'll never surrender. That  
eagle up yonder. While the Bee Hive's a Stinger, or Cannon  
to thunder.

The People -- Not the mountains and deserts, make the  
Commonwealth.<sup>74</sup>

"Mormonism and Marriage": More good, and more favour; for  
Solomon says, "Whoso finds a wife, finds a good thing, and ob-  
tains favour of the Lord;" wherefore, as he had many, the more  
good; and the more good, the more favours of the Lord. That's  
scripture.<sup>75</sup>

"Mormonism" -- A plurality of worlds, a plurality of Gods,  
and a plurality of wives, with all truth in all eternity.

President Brigham Young -- With the keys of heaven and earth  
to open and shut, and all Israel to sanction.<sup>76</sup>

#### Early Religious Activities

The blessings of the sacred endowments were first administered  
to some of the faithful saints as early as January, 1852. Once again,  
as in Nauvoo, William W. Phelps was taking part as an ordinance worker,  
acting the part of Satan in the endowment.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Deseret News, July 10, 1853, Vol. 3, p. 62.

<sup>74</sup> The Frontier Guardian, October 3, 1851, Vol. III, No. 18, p. 240.

<sup>75</sup> Millennial Star, July 24, 1852, Vol. 14, No. 23, p. 653.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., July 24, 1856, Vol. 18, p. 677.

<sup>77</sup> Jensen, op. cit., p. 696.



The following letter, written a few years before his death, clearly illustrates the foregoing statement.

Great Salt Lake City, October 3, 1864

Bishop Miller, I have worked, (since we commenced in Nauvoo,) in the endowments. And once in a while I need new clothes to work in. I want the good Saints of Provo, and Springville to get me up six and a half yards of nice blue or dark mixed Jeans for a coat and pants for the old fellow to act in: I do not ask them to give the cloth unless they have a mind to, for I shall send you a hundred or more Almanacs to pay for the cloth. It needs about 5 yards of common cloth for lining. Now if the brethren respond to this call, the "old fellow himself" will always be ready to reward his friends with what the world never knows. What ever you do in the matter please drop me a line.

My idea is to have a "priestly suit" of home manufacture, and Provo and Springville, may as well have the credit of furnishing the materials as anybody else.

I am nearly 73 years old, and all of your good Saints, of or near that age, will join with me in saying -- the tree is known by its fruit. I hope to enjoy the next half of my life, or the rest of it, on the land of Zion according to revelation.

As ever I remain yours in the  
everlasting gospel,

/s/ W. W. Phelps<sup>78</sup>

Brother Phelps was also present when the Endowment House was dedicated in Salt Lake City, May 5, 1855, and afterward he continued on as an ordinance worker in that building.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to his work in the endowments, W. W. Phelps was a prominent member of the High Priests Quorum in Salt Lake City. He also met with the presidency of the Church in many of their important conferences and council meetings.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Phelps' Letters, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Jensen, op. cit., p. 697.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 696.

W. W. Phelps was always a popular speaker among the Saints and he frequently sat on the stand to address the congregations during the General Conferences of the Church.<sup>81</sup>

The following summaries of his speeches at these conferences are indicative of the faith and testimony that he manifest throughout his life.

Elder W. W. Phelps addressed (in the afternoon) the congregation from the text of Matthew: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof: -- correcting it by the Book of Mormon which gives the truth, that sufficient is the day unto the evil thereof. Related the last vision of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, a few days before his martyrdom in Carthage Jail; was greatly encouraged in the reflection according to the literal meaning of his text, as translated in the Book of Mormon, that the Lord was sufficient to every emergency, and not the devil as published in King James's Christian Bible; dwelt upon the folly of the present generation in following the traditions of past ages; sketched the infant state of the Church when the Book of Mormon came forth; showed the importance of revelation to know the truth, on account of the variety of opinions of men, no two, out of this Church, agreeing upon the same point. It is only by the gift of the Holy Ghost that man can receive the true light that lights every man that comes into the world. There was never but one true religion, and that relates to the light and life which is revealed by the gospel. Bring converts of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from every known nation upon earth to Utah, and they have one faith, one baptism, one Lord, and they are one; and this oneness is revealed to them by the same spirit, showing that the Lord is sufficient unto every emergency.<sup>82</sup>

W. W. Phelps, sitting on the stand at the Annual Conference, April 6, 1860, with the High Priests, made remarks on the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, a copy of which he said he received on the 9th day of April, 30 years ago; that book he considered to be the foundation of all that which has brought so many of us together, therefore he rose up to bear testimony of its truth. He held in his hand a copy of the first edition of that book, and declared it to be the truth of the Almighty; he had heard the testimony of Joseph Smith and that of the chosen witnesses in relation to the Book of Mormon, and he with them wished

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Deseret News, July 27, 1859, Vol. 9, No. 21, p. 164.

to give his testimony to the world relative to its divine origin. Said he knew this to be the church of the living God, and that Brigham Young was the legally appointed successor of Joseph Smith, and that all who receive this testimony will be saved in the celestial kingdom, and he wished he had a thousand tongues to speak of the great things of the kingdom to the nations of the earth.<sup>83</sup>

At the General Conference of the Church of April 8, 1864, Elder W. W. Phelps said the Lord had never turned away from a people who kept his word. The nations of the earth were at war and vied with each other in the manufacture of the most powerful engines of human destruction. Soon there would be no peace but in Zion, and words of the Prophets would be fulfilled that predicted that he who would not take up his sword against his fellowman must needs flee to Zion. The Saints were exhorted to do right and ever be ready, for they knew not the hour when the thief cometh that might seek to despoil them of their virtues and possessions.<sup>84</sup>

#### The Death of W. W. Phelps

The end of life came to William Wines Phelps on March 6, 1872, at his old home in Salt Lake City. He was eighty years of age.<sup>85</sup>

It is interesting to note that Stenhouse, before Brother Phelps' death, wrote that he was:

. . . a brother who performed a very important part in the history of Mormonism. The career of "W. W.," as he is familiarly styled, has been somewhat chequered, but he lives, and is "not to taste of death." He is about eighty years of age, and has the promise of living till Jesus comes again . . . .<sup>86</sup>

After W. W. Phelps' death, Stenhouse again wrote:

Since the foregoing was written, the Salt Lake papers have published the following notice:

Death of Phelps --

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., April 11, 1860, Vol. 10, No. 6, p. 45.

<sup>84</sup> "Journal History," April 8, 1864.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., March 7, 1872.

<sup>86</sup> T. B. Stenhouse, Rocky Mountain Saints (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873), p. 42.

Alas, poor Phelps! Often did the old man, in public and in private, regale the Saints with the assurance that they had the promise by revelation that he should not taste of death till Jesus came. The last time that the author spoke with "Brother" Phelps, the latter was fully satisfied that the revelation of Joseph Smith could not fail in its fulfillment.<sup>87</sup>

Oliver B. Huntington also stated that "Joseph once told W. W. Phelps and his wife that they should never taste of death."<sup>88</sup> However, in addition to this he explains:

The manner of the fulfillment of that promise is rather singular. They supposed, and so did all that knew of the promise, that they were to never die, but the Lord does business in his own way and his way is not as the way of a man.

Before Brother Phelps died he lost all his judgment, lost all his mind reason, consciousness and all sense. He knew nothing, not even his name, nor how to eat, thus being unable to taste of anything, not even death. His mind gradually dwindled, withered and dried up. His wife was killed instantly, so quickly that she had no time to taste of death. She was killed as she was dipping up a bucket of water from the ditch, a gust of wind hurled a board from a house and it struck her on the neck, breaking it instantly. "She never tasted of death nor even felt the blow."<sup>89</sup>

On March 9, 1872, the funeral for Brother Phelps was held and largely attended. The funeral sermons were delivered by John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff and Bishop Edward Hunter.<sup>90</sup>

Thus ended the colorful life of the versatile Phelps, truly a Mormon writer, educator, and pioneer. The writer of this thesis agrees with his true and faithful wife, Sally, who wrote: \*

. . . Mr. Phelps died the sixth day of March, and will have a part in the first resurrection of Saints and Apostles.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Diary of Oliver B. Huntington, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "Journal History," March 9, 1872.

\*See Appendix H, p. 221a.

Through all his fightings and doings, he has died at a good old age. Peace to his memory. His works will follow him. He is with Joseph and Hyrum, the Blessed Martyrs, who died for the testimony of Jesus, who believed in Revelation and Resurrection liberally fulfilled . . . .<sup>91</sup>

## CHAPTER X

### THE HYMNS AND POETRY OF W. W. PHELPS

For my soul delighteth  
in the song of the heart;  
Yea, the song of the righteous  
is a prayer unto me,  
And it shall be answered  
With a blessing upon their heads.

Doctrine and Covenants 25:12

#### Importance of Hymns in Early Latter-day Saint History

Burl Ives, who has written about folk songs as the expressions of a people, made the significant statement:

A vital people are a singing people, and a vital people have current experiences out of which musical expression can come.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Ives suggests that when something significant happens in a dynamic history or society, caused by the challenges and the pressures of the social, economical and political environment in which this society lives, the people sing about it. The poetry and the music may be unrefined, but they express the feelings or soul of the times.

Roy Cheville, writing on this subject states:

. . . . If our theology is shallow, if our artistic appreciations are crude, if our world vision is narrow, if our universe is self-centered, all these will show up in the songs we sing. In this sense, any uplift in our hymnody will come through general enrichment of us as a people so we shall have great faith, vision, and sense of mission to be expressed.

---

<sup>1</sup>Roy A. Cheville, They Sang of the Restoration (A Herald House Publication, Independence, Missouri: Copyright 1955), p. 9.

A history of a people<sup>2</sup> will reveal what they speak of out of their hearts in song.  
 . . . . .

This is true throughout the early history of the Latter-day Saints who sang into their songs the true feelings of their hearts. It was an integral part of their faith to sing. They sang with a knowledge that God lived, and that he had truly spoken to the Prophet Joseph Smith. They sang of the coming forth of the scriptures of ancient America. They sang of their expectancy of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule and reign on earth for a thousand years. They sang of their dream of Zion that was to be established here on earth. They sang this new message with a new fervor and with a fresh vitality that would not go unexpressed.

The Restoration Movement had singing in its heart. Therefore, when the first hymn book of the Latter-day Saint Church was published, in 1835 at Kirtland, Ohio, the preface read:

In order to sing by the Spirit, and with the understanding, it is necessary that the church of the Latter-day Saints should have a collection of 'Sacred Hymns,' adapted to their faith and belief in the gospel, and, as far as can be, holding forth the promises made to the fathers who died in the precious faith of a glorious resurrection, and a thousand years' reign on earth with the Son of Man in his glory. Notwithstanding the church, as it were, is still in its infancy, yet, as the song of the righteous is a prayer unto God, it is sincerely hoped that the following collection, selected with an eye single to his glory, may answer every purpose till more are composed, or till we are blessed with a copious variety of the songs of Zion.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Hymnbook (Published in Kirtland by Frederick G. Williams and Company, 1835), Preface. (Copy at Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

It is interesting to note that after joining the Church in 1831, W. W. Phelps with his rare poetical talent and literary ability, was the first to provide hymns for the Restoration Movement.<sup>4</sup> His songs were and are still "sung by the spirit."

It is also interesting to note that when this first hymn book was published in 1835, that twenty-nine of the first ninety hymns were written by W. W. Phelps. The names of them are:

An Angel Come Down  
 Come All Ye Sons of Zion  
 Awake! O, Ye People  
 Come Let Us Sing an Evening Hymn  
 Come All Ye Saints Who Dwell on Earth  
 Earth With Her Ten Thousand Flowers  
 Farewell Our Friends and Brethren  
 From The Regions of Glory An Angel  
 Gently Raise the Sacred Strain  
 God Spoke the Word and Time Began  
 Let Us Pray, Gladly Pray  
 Now Let Us Rejoice in the Day of Salvation  
 Now We'll Sing With One Accord  
 O God Th' Eternal Father  
 O Happy Souls Who Pray  
 O Jesus the Giver  
 O Stop and Tell Me, Red Man  
 Redeemer of Israel  
 See All Creation Join  
 See How the Morning Sun  
 The Gallant Ship is Under Way  
 The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning  
 The Towers of Zion Soon Shall Rise  
 The Time is Nigh, The Happy Time  
 The Earth Was Once a Garden Place  
 To Him That Made the World  
 What Fair One is This?  
 We're Not Ashamed to Own Our Lord  
 When Joseph His Brethren Beheld<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>The Juvenile Instructor, (Vol. 38, Published by Deseret Sunday School Union, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1903), p. 206.

<sup>5</sup>Virginia Marzolf Whitlock, Music in the Mormon Church During the Sojourn in Nauvoo (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Department of Music, Graduate College, State University of Iowa, 1940), p. 21.



It is significant that of the first ninety hymns contained in the 1835 edition, twenty-eight can be found in the later editions of Latter-day Saint hymn books. The following is a list of hymns that have been retained which came from the pens of early Mormon poets:

|                                                  |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Great is the Lord; 'Tis Good to Praise           | Eliza R. Snow   |
| How Often in Sweet Meditation                    | Farley P. Pratt |
| - Know This, That Every Soul is Free             | Wm. C. Gregg    |
| The Day is Past and Gone                         | John Leland     |
| An Angel Came Down From the Mansions<br>of Glory | W. W. Phelps    |
| Awake! O Ye People, The Savior is Coming         | "               |
| - Come, All Ye Sons of Zion                      | "               |
| - Come All Ye Saints Who Dwell on Earth          | "               |
| - Earth With Her Ten Thousand Flowers            | "               |
| Ere Long the Veil Will Rend in Twain             | "               |
| - Gently Raise the Sacred Strain                 | "               |
| Let Us Pray, Gladly Pray                         | "               |
| Now We'll Sing with one Accord                   | "               |
| - O God, Th' Eternal Father                      | "               |
| O Stop and Tell me, Red Man                      | "               |
| O Jesus, the Giver                               | "               |
| - Redeemer of Israel                             | "               |
| See! All Creation Joins                          | "               |
| The Gallant Ship is Under Way                    | "               |
| - The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning       | "               |
| The Towers of Zion Soon Shall Rise               | "               |
| This Earth Was Once a Garden Place               | "               |
| To Him Who Made the World                        | "               |
| We're Not Ashamed to Own Our Lord <sup>6</sup>   | "               |

W. W. Phelps' songs were "sung by the spirit" because he wrote from his heart. His songs came from an inspired mind. As Preston Nibley said in a speech at the Brigham Young University:

. . . . The Germans have a fine old saying, "was aus dem Hertze Kommt, geht zu Hertaen," "What comes from the heart goes into other hearts." You will never write a poem that will live unless you write it from your heart and from your soul.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Ina T. Webb, Congregational Singing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, May 18, 1931), pp. 27-28.

<sup>7</sup>Preston Nibley, Creative Writing, Speeches of the Year at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, January 18, 1955, p. 2.

The poet, Carlyle says, "He puts into words what we all feel, but which only he can express."<sup>8</sup>

Historical Background of Phelps' Most Choice Hymns

Alfred Tennyson once made the remark:

A good hymn is the most difficult thing in the world to write. In a good hymn you have to be commonplace and poetical. The moment you cease to be commonplace and put in any expression at all out of common, it ceases to be a hymn.<sup>9</sup>

Thus a good hymn tends to edify and inspire the lives of people. Those who believe that "hell is crammed with infants damned" will sing such a view. He who places man in a completely fallen condition will sing of "such a worm as I." Those whose universe centers in themselves will not thrill to singing "The Whole Wide World for Jesus." Hymn singing and hymn writing is related to the total life of a people. They can only sing out of the world they know. Hymns cannot be forced. They have to speak for the people.<sup>10</sup>

W. W. Phelps spoke for his people in his hymns. For example, when the first issues of the Evening and Morning Star came off the press, it contained one of Brother Phelps' earliest hymns. It reads as follows:

Redeemer of Israel,  
Our only delight,  
On whom for a blessing we call;  
Our shadow by day,  
And our pillar by night,  
Our King, our Deliv'rer, our all!

We know He is coming  
To gather His sheep,  
And lead them to Zion in love;

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Cheyille, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

For why in the valley  
Of death should they weep?  
Or in the lone wilderness rove!

How long we have wandered  
As strangers in sin,  
And cried in the desert for Thee!  
Our foes have rejoiced  
When our sorrows they've seen  
But Israel will shortly be free.

As children of Zion,  
Good tidings for us,  
The tokens already appear;  
Fear not, and be just,  
For the kingdom is ours;  
The hour of redemption is near.<sup>11</sup>

This song was written when the Land of Zion had been definitely located with the center place at Independence, Missouri.<sup>12</sup>

Brother Phelps was aware of the early problems that faced the Prophet Joseph Smith and others. He had witnessed the beginning of the settlement in Independence. He was keenly aware of the crude opposition to the Church that had developed in Missouri, and that had also taken place in the East. Thus he was a witness as to the daily tribulations of the Saints in their early efforts to establish Zion. The imminence of mighty events has been noted by Wheelwright who says:

For the simple truth is that they were under the same illusion respecting the immediacy of the Second Coming of Christ as were the Christians of St. Paul's time, and there is evidence to suppose that Joseph Smith did not, to some extent, share these illusions. At all events, the Prophet, on more than one occasion, has referred to the city and the temple in Jackson county so glowingly as to awaken in his disciples everywhere a feeling that that important event was on the eve of arriving.

<sup>11</sup> Hymnbook (First English Edition, Published in Liverpool, England, 1840), p. 212.

<sup>12</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 57:3.

The City of Zion was to be called the New Jerusalem to distinguish it from the Palestinian town. And then the temple was to be erected there, the one which, as foretold by Malachi, the risen Jesus should come "suddenly" to. And on its completion, "a cloud should rest upon it, even the glory of the Lord." But Joseph added, prophetically if vaguely, that "these things" would not happen till "after much tribulation."<sup>13</sup>

Out of this situation, W. W. Phelps penned the dynamic hymn, "Redeemer of Israel." In this little poem of four verses by Brother Phelps he expresses the thoughts that we are all grateful for our Redeemer; that He is coming to lead us; that He has good tidings for us; that the kingdom is ours; that the hour of redemption is near. Thus as Preston Nibley said, "That is about all Brother Phelps says in that little song, but it tells a story that lives."<sup>14</sup>

It is a thrilling experience that defies description to stand at the opening of a general conference and listen to the thousands of Letter-day Saints from all over the world lift a prayer in song to the "Redeemer of Israel."

In this same southwestern portion of Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith identified the location of the Biblical Garden of Eden where Adam met his fellow patriarchs in "the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman." Shortly after hearing the revelation, (1835), Phelps wrote the following hymn:<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> D. Sterling Wheelwright, Study of Mormon Hymns (Thesis for doctorate degree, Dept. of Music, Baltimore, Maryland, 1943), copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

<sup>14</sup> Nibley, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Wheelwright, op. cit., p. 53.

This earth was once a garden place,  
 With all her glories common,  
 And men did live a holy race,  
 And worship Jesus face to face,  
 In Adam-ondi-Ahman.

We read that Enoch walked with God,  
 Above the power of mammon,  
 And Zion spread herself abroad,  
 And Saints and angels sang aloud,  
 In Adam-ondi-Ahman.

Her land was good and greatly blest,  
 Beyond old Israel's Canaan,  
 Her fame was known from east to west,  
 Her peace was great, and pure the rest  
 Of Adam-ondi-Ahman.

Hosanna to such days to come,  
 The Savior's second coming,  
 When all the earth in glorious bloom  
 Affords the Saints a holy home,  
 Like Adam-ondi-Ahman.<sup>16</sup>

E. H. Roberts states:

This hymn was a great favorite among the early Saints, although they perhaps, did not understand at that time the significance of the name, nor even now do they understand its full significance. All that is known of its meaning is what the Lord revealed to the Prophet, viz., that is significant of the fact that it designates the place where the Lord will come and meet with His people as described by Daniel the Prophet.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Adam-ondi-Ahman was known to the Saints at this time as the place where the Lord appeared unto Adam our Father, three years previous to his death, and ministered unto the righteous among his posterity assembled at that place; on which occasion Adam was called "Michael," "The Prince," "The Archangel," and the Lord administered unto him and said unto him, "I have set thee at the head: a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them." It was

<sup>16</sup> Hymnbook, First English Edition, op. cit., p. 277.

<sup>17</sup> "Journal History," May 19, 1838.

this knowledge that inspired the hymn composed by W. W. Phelps.<sup>18</sup>

"All hymnals include poems out of the overflow of those who lived near to the out-of-doors," writes Cheville. The first vision came to the Prophet Joseph in a grove of trees near his home. The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood took place in the woods by the Susquehanna River. The Gold Plates were located on a beautiful hillside. In conjunction with these facts, Brother Phelps saw the trees, the clear water, the hills, the birds, the flowers. He saw the "great invisibles through the visibles." To W. W. Phelps the beauties and wonders of nature spoke a spiritual message.<sup>19</sup> Thus out of this observation he wrote one of his most beautiful hymns, "Earth With Her Ten Thousand Flowers."

Earth, with her ten thousand flowers,  
Air, with all its beams and showers,  
Heaven's infinite expanse,  
Sea's resplendent countenance,  
All around and all above  
Bear this record, God is love.

Sounds among the vales and hills,  
In the woods and by the rills,  
Of the breeze and of the bird,  
By the gentle murmur stirred,  
Sacred songs, beneath, above,  
Have one chorus, God is love.

All the hopes that sweetly start  
From the fountain of the heart,  
All the bliss that ever comes  
To our earthly human homes,  
All the voices from above  
Sweetly whisper, God is love.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 364-65.

<sup>19</sup> Cheville, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>20</sup> Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 258-59.

William Phelps saw in what was about him the expression of the divine love. The hymn, "Earth With Her Ten Thousand Flowers," is sung by those who sense the inner peace and assurance of God's love as they look at the manifestations of beauty, providentially provided both in the world of nature about them and in the world of faith within them.

It was during the early Jackson county, Missouri, days that W. W. Phelps also wrote "Now Let Us Rejoice in the Day of Salvation."

Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation;  
 No longer as strangers on earth need we roam,  
 Good tidings are sounding to us and each nation,  
 And shortly the hour of redemption will come,  
 When all that was promised the Saints will be given,  
 And none will molest them from morn until eve,  
 And earth will appear as the garden of Eden,  
 And Jesus will say to all Israel, Come home.

We'll love one another, and never dissemble,  
 But cease to do evil, and ever by one;  
 And when the ungodly are fearing, and tremble,  
 We'll watch for the day when the Savior will come  
 When all that was promised the Saints will be given  
 And none will molest them from morn until eve,  
 And earth will appear as the garden of Eden,  
 And Jesus will say to all Israel, Come home.

In faith we'll rely on the arm of Jehovah  
 To guide through these last days of trouble and gloom,  
 And after the scourges and harvest are over,  
 We'll rise with the just when the Savior doth come.  
 Then all that was promised the Saints will be given  
 And they will be crowned as the angels of heaven,  
 And earth will appear as the garden of Eden,  
 And Christ and His people will ever be one.<sup>21</sup>

George D. Poyer properly introduced this hymn when he wrote:

More, perhaps than any other hymn in our collection, "Now Let Us Rejoice" reminds us of the lily -- not the one that "grows in the field" and that Jesus bids us to "consider," but rather the one that springs out of the slime of the open miasmatic pool.

This is the most beautiful of flowers, the most delicate, the most artistic in its shape and coloring. Yet it is produced out of the most unpromising of materials; it grows where one

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 198-99.

would never look for beauty and grace and loveliness. Somehow it manages to suck up only the makings of perfection from the mud, to transform this on the way up its long, slender stem, and then to exhibit its wonder to the eye of the passer-by. "Cultivating the lily" is a phrase that expresses the utter jubility of human power to improve upon this delicate artistry.

It was something like that in the writing of this beautiful hymn.

When William W. Phelps wrote this poem, he was living in what was known as "Zion." Located in Jackson County, Missouri. The place had about twelve hundred Latter-day Saints. They had built homes, some of which were of burnt brick and two stories in height, great acres were put under cultivation, a school was established, a press set up (The Evening and Morning Star), and everything pointed to the building of a commonwealth that would realize the dream of those who lived there. Phelps was the editor of the Star.<sup>22</sup>

It will be remembered that in 1833, when the mob of five hundred came upon Independence, they tore down the two-story brick building in which the Church press was housed and in the lower part of which the Phelps' lived; they destroyed the press, burned books and papers, drove Sister Phelps and her baby out; they closed the store, and tarred and feathered Bishop Partridge. Later, when the chill of November came, all the Saints were ejected from the county, and were not allowed to take with them any clothing or food. Thus, as winter was beginning during the month of November, all the Saints were driven from their homes and were not allowed to provide for their meager necessities. In addition to this they were to have more than two hundred houses destroyed, which they had so pains-takingly constructed. "Now Let Us Rejoice" came out of this scene. Defeat, frustration, homelessness, suffering, privation, hunger, -- these produced a hymn that still gives hope and sustenance to hundreds of thousands who live in better times.

---

<sup>22</sup>George D. Fyler, Stories of Latter-day Saint Hymns (Printed in the United States, 1939), pp. 187-88.



Says Fyler:

It was not fanaticism that brought it forth; it was faith, not a sense of permanent, but only of temporary frustration. Few hymns express better the feeling of joy, of promise, of the future look. It was the lily coming out of the ooze.<sup>23</sup>

The idea for this hymn undoubtedly came to Brother Phelps during these turbulent times when reading a letter from Frederick G. Williams, who wrote:

. . . . We can do no more for you than we are doing, but we have this great consolation that God will deliver Zion, and establish you upon the land of your everlasting inheritance. Remember that this is only for a trial of your faith, and he that overcomes and endures to the end, will be rewarded a hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come eternal life: so brethren, you have great reason to rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh.<sup>24</sup>

W. W. Phelps at this time also witnessed the missionary spirit that caused men to go to Canada, across the ocean to England, to the Islands of the Sea, and finally into the whole world. From this observation he penned the following:

Farewell, our friends and brethren,  
Here take the parting hand;  
We go to preach the Gospel  
In every foreign land.

Farewell, our wives and children,  
Who render life so sweet,  
Dry up your tears, be faithful  
Till we again shall meet.

Farewell, ye scenes of childhood  
And fancies of our youth;  
We go to combat error  
With everlasting truth.

Farewell, all carnal pleasures,  
Which gild the scenes of mirth

<sup>23</sup> Fyler, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>24</sup> Times and Seasons, Oct. 10, 1833, Vol. 6, No. 7, p. 864.

Your days are surely numbered,  
To trouble man on earth.

Farewell, farewell our country;  
Our home is now abroad,  
To labor in the vineyard,  
In righteousness for God.

The gallant ships are ready  
To bear us o'er the sea,  
To gather up the blessed,  
That Zion may be free.<sup>25</sup>

Brother Phelps truly was aware of the great principle that he who "loseth his life" in the service of the Lord and his fellowmen "shall find it." This principle is still the fundamental principle of Mormon missionary activity, at home, or abroad. Over a century later finds literally thousands of missionaries constantly in the field, at a cost to themselves and friends of millions of dollars annually.

As editor of the Evening and Morning Star, W. W. Phelps had published portions of the Pearl of Great Price known today as the Book of Moses. Recorded in this record is the story of Enoch and the City of Zion. From this experience, Brother Phelps printed the words for the beautiful hymn "Glorious Things Are Sung of Zion."<sup>26</sup>

Glorious things are sung of Zion,  
Enoch's city seen of old,  
Where the righteous, being perfect,  
Walked with God in streets of gold.  
Love and virtue, faith and wisdom,  
Grace and gifts were all combined;  
As himself each loved his neighbor;  
All were one in heart and mind.

There they shunned the power of Satan,  
And observed celestial laws;  
For in Adam-ondi-Ahman  
Zion rose where Eden was.

---

<sup>25</sup> Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 234-35.

<sup>26</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 31.

When beyond the power of evil,  
 So that none could covet wealth,  
 One continual feast of blessings  
 Crowned their days with peace and health.

Then the towers of Zion glittered  
 Like the sun in yonder skies,  
 And the wicked stood and trembled,  
 Filled with wonder and surprise:  
 Then their faith and works were perfect --  
 Lo, they followed their great Head;  
 So the city went to heaven,  
 And the world said Zion's fled!

When the Lord returns with Zion,  
 And we hear the watchman cry,  
 Then we'll surely be united,  
 And we'll all see eye to eye;  
 Then we'll mingle with the angels,  
 And the Lord will bless His own;  
 Then the earth will be as Eden,  
 And we'll know as we are known.<sup>27</sup>

The conversion of W. W. Phelps was accomplished after he had read the Book of Mormon. He was well aware of the ancient American civilization that the book represented. Thus, in a letter to Oliver Cowdery from the frontier, Brother Phelps stated:

I should do injustice to the subject, were I to omit a notice of the Indians that inhabit the territory, of which I am writing. When I was at the garrison, I saw a noble looking, portly Indian, dressed and harnessed in fine style for hunting, and for the life of me, I could not help composing the following lines for

#### THE REDMAN

O stop and tell me, Red Man,  
 Who are ye? why do you roam?  
 And how you get your living?  
 Have you no God; -- no home?

With stature straight and portly,  
 And decked in native pride  
 With feathers, paints, and broaches,  
 He willingly replied: --

<sup>27</sup>  
 Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

"I once was pleasant Ephraim,  
 "When Jacob for me pray'd;  
 "But oh! how blessings vanish,  
 "When man from God has stray'd.

"Before your nation knew us,  
 "Some thousand moons ago,  
 "Our fathers fell in darkness,  
 "And wander'd to and fro.

"And long they've liv'd by hunting  
 "Instead of work and arts,  
 "And so our race has dwindled  
 "To idle Indian hearts.

"Yet hope within us lingers,  
 "As if the Spirit spoke:--  
 "He'll come for your redemption,  
 "And break your Gentile yoke.

"And all your captive brothers,  
 "From every clime shall come,  
 "And quit their savage customs,  
 "To live with God at home.

"Then joy will fill our bosoms,  
 "And blessings crown our days,  
 "To live in pure religion,  
 "And sing our Maker's praise."<sup>28</sup>

This poem was put to music and became an early favorite hymn of the Saints in their congregational singing.

The simple account of the organization of the Church, on April 6, 1830, has this entry, "We then took bread, blessed it and brake it with them, also wine, blessed it and drank it with them."<sup>29</sup> Even at this early date the blessings had been given for the sacramental bread and wine. (Doctrine and Covenants 20). These prayers consecrate the bread and wine for those who partake of them. They are emblems only and are

<sup>28</sup> Messenger and Advocate, December, 1834, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 73.

and are efficacious only as they are partaken of in worthiness of heart. Of the Church's first conference, June 1, 1830, Joseph Smith wrote, "We partook together of the emblems of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>30</sup> There was a sense of intimate fellowship in the young Church, and this sacramental observance linked the Saints together closely.

It will be remembered that W. W. Phelps had long enjoyed a close association with the Prophet Joseph. They had gone to Missouri together in the summer of 1831. W. W. Phelps had worked assiduously to set up a printing plant in Independence. He had been driven from business and home. The printing shop and his own house had been demolished by mobbers. Now he was back in Kirtland, making his temporary home with Joseph Smith.<sup>31</sup> It was at this time that Joseph asked William Phelps to assist him in presiding over the sacrament service. The congregation had increased in size and such a service called for more preparation than one, in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Joseph Smith observed to his friend, William, that the service called for adequate preparation and commented that "its setting called for a religious beauty."<sup>32</sup>

Then W. W. Phelps walked alone for a while. The temple construction was going on. He would think of the observance of the Lord's Supper in this first structure of the church . . .<sup>33</sup>

With this motivation, he penned the sacred lines to "O God, Th' Eternal Father."

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>31</sup> Chevillie, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

O God, th' Eternal Father,  
 Who dwells amid the sky!  
 In Jesus' name we ask Thee  
 To bless and sanctify,  
 If we are pure before Thee,  
 This bread and cup of wine,  
 That we may all remember  
 That offering divine.

That sacred, holy off'ring,  
 By man least understood,  
 To have our sins remitted,  
 And take His flesh and blood;  
 That we may ever witness  
 The suff'rings of Thy Son,  
 And always have His Spirit,  
 To make our hearts as one.

When Jesus, the Anointed,  
 Descended from above,  
 And gave Himself a ransom  
 To win our souls with love,  
 With no apparent beauty,  
 That men should Him desire,  
 He was the promised Savior  
 To purify with fire.

How infinite that wisdom,  
 The plan of holiness,  
 That made salvation perfect,  
 And veiled the Lord in flesh,  
 To walk upon his footstool,  
 And be like man, almost  
 In His exalted station,  
 And die, or all was lost!

'Twas done; all nature trembles;  
 Yet, by the power of faith,  
 He rose as God triumphant,  
 And broke the bands of death,  
 And rising conqu'ror, "captive  
 He led captivity,"  
 And sat down with the Father  
 To all eternity.

He is the true Messiah  
 That died and lives again;  
 We look not for another,  
 He is the Lamb once slain;  
 He is the stone and shepherd  
 Of Israel scattered far,  
 The glorious branch from Jesse,  
 The bright and morning star.

Again, he is that Prophet  
 That Moses said should come,  
 Raised up among His brethren,  
 To call the righteous home;  
 And all that will not hear Him,  
 Shall feel His chast'ning rod,  
 Till wickedness is ended,  
 As saith the Lord, our God.

He comes! He comes in glory,  
 The veil has vanished too,  
 With angels, yea, our fathers,  
 To drink this cup anew,  
 And sing the songs of Zion,  
 And shout, "'Tis done, 'tis done!"  
 While every son and daughter  
 Rejoices: We are one.<sup>34</sup>

The winter months of early 1836 were busy ones in Kirtland. The elders had gathered in for the school of the elders. Minutes of councils, of school sessions, and social gatherings indicate how much singing was going to play a part in the life of the Saints. Joseph Smith tells of a feast at the home of Bishop H. K. Whitney: "The company was large, and before we partook, we had some of the songs of Zion sung." The minutes of a joint council, January 16, 1836, state that "Council opened with singing," and "Council dismissed by singing and prayer."<sup>35</sup> Joseph Smith tells of a wedding, January 20: "A hymn was sung."<sup>36</sup> Of a gathering at his own house, Joseph wrote: "We sang the praise of God in animated strains, and the power of love and union was felt and enjoyed." When the sisters met to make the veil of the temple, they began with singing. Of it the record says: "Closed by singing and prayer, which is customary at the commencement and close of all councils and meetings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 156-58.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 372. <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 377.

<sup>37</sup> Cheville, op. cit., p. 52.

Cheville informs us that:

Two conditions of these times were conducive to hymn writing. First, the people were singing; second, heartwarming events were taking place . . . .<sup>38</sup>

Certainly, W. W. Phelps was moved by these stirring happenings. His heart was moved to joy and gratitude and consecration. This was expressed in the following hymn, "O Jesus, The Giver."

O Jesus! the giver  
of all we enjoy,  
Our lives to Thy honor  
We wish to employ;  
With praises unceasing  
We'll sing of Thy name,  
Thy goodness increasing,  
Thy love we'll proclaim.

With joy we remember  
The dawn of that day,  
When cold as December,  
In darkness we lay!  
The sweet invitation  
We heard with surprise,  
And witnessed salvation  
Flow down from the skies.

The wonderful name  
Of our Jesus we'll sing,  
And publish the fame  
Of our Captain and King,  
With sweet exultation  
His goodness we prove;  
His name is salvation,  
His nature is love.

We now are enlisted  
In Jesus' blest cause,  
Divinely assisted  
To conquer our foes:  
His grace will support us  
Till conflicts are o'er,  
He then will escort us  
To Zion's bright shore.<sup>39</sup>

It was also at Kirtland, Ohio, where the first courageous effort

---

<sup>38</sup> Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 22-23.  
<sup>39</sup> Cheville, op. cit., pp. 56-57.



to build a House of God took place. The cornerstone of the Kirtland Temple was laid July 23, 1833. At this time, unknown to the Saints in Ohio, those in Missouri were being driven out of Jackson County, Missouri. As a result, work on the temple was interrupted by the relief expedition's journey known as "Zion's Camp," to the Missouri Saints in the summer of 1834. Sidney Rigdon stayed in Ohio and directed the work of building the temple and kept up the morale. Upon the return of the Camp, the men continued their labors on the temple. As Heber C. Kimball wrote: "The whole church united in this great undertaking and every man lent a helping hand." The Prophet himself served as foreman in the stone quarry.<sup>40</sup>

\* As the temple neared completion and the date of the dedication services were drawing near, the weeks were occupied with details of finishing the building and planning the program. Leaders were arranging for quorums to be placed appropriately in the temple. On Sunday morning, Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps were together in the school house where services were being held. That morning the Church leaders spoke in turn with a rich endowment -- a prelude to what was to happen at the dedication service. Joseph Smith wrote of it: "The gift of tongues came on us also, like the rushing of the mighty wind, and my soul was filled with the glory of God."<sup>41</sup>

Brother Phelps was deeply moved and formulated what he felt in the form of a hymn which he scribbled on the back of an envelope entitled "The Spirit of God Like A Fire Is Burning."<sup>42</sup> The hymn reads as follows:

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 391.

<sup>42</sup> Cheville, op. cit., p. 57.

The Spirit of God like a fire is burning!  
 The latter-day glory begins to come forth,  
 The visions and blessings of old are returning,  
 And angels are coming to visit the earth.  
 We'll sing and we'll shout with the armies of heaven,  
 Hosanna, hosanna to God and the Lamb!  
 Let glory to them in the highest be given,  
 Henceforth and forever; Amen and Amen!

The Lord is extending the Saints' understanding,  
 Restoring their judges and all as at first,  
 The knowledge and power of God are expanding,  
 The veil o'er the earth is beginning to burst  
 We'll sing and we'll shout, etc.

We'll call in our solemn assemblies in spirit,  
 To spread forth the kingdom of heaven abroad,  
 That we through our faith may begin to inherit  
 The visions and blessings and glories of God.  
 We'll sing and we'll shout, etc.

We'll wash and be washed, and with oil be anointed,  
 Withal not omitting the washing of feet,  
 For he that receiveth his penny appointed  
 Must surely be clean at the harvest of wheat  
 We'll sing and we'll shout, etc.

Old Israel, that fled from the world for his freedom  
 Must come with the cloud and the pillar amain,  
 A Moses and Aaron and Joshua lead him,  
 And feed him on manna from heaven again.  
 We'll sing and we'll shout, etc.

How blessed the day when the lamb and the lion  
 Shall lie down together without any ire,  
 And Ephraim be crowned with his blessing in Zion,  
 As Jesus descends with his chariots of fire!  
 We'll sing and we'll shout, etc.<sup>43</sup>

W. W. Phelps later read the poem to the Prophet Joseph when he  
 happened into the Kirtland printing office. The Prophet was greatly im-  
 pressed and instructed Brother Phelps to publish it on white satin\* for  
 the dedicatory services.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 268-270.

<sup>44</sup>Wheelwright, op. cit., p. 65.

\*In a letter from Lydia Phelps Stowell, 19092 Grove Place, Bloom-  
 ington, California, Feb. 25, 1958, it is stated: "There is a very elderly

W. W. Phelps then gave his hymn to M. C. Davis, who was directing the choir for the dedication service. The choir leader taught it to the choir and used it as an anthem at the dedication service.<sup>45</sup> Fyber informs us that:

. . . . It was sung by the Saints in their meetings before the completion of the Kirtland Temple; but the full measure of its emotional and spiritual power was not reached until it climaxed the dedicatory services of that temple, which occurred March 27, 1836.<sup>46</sup>

In the afternoon session a vote sustaining the authorities of the Church was taken, afterwhich the dedicatory prayer was offered by the Prophet Joseph Smith. This prayer constitutes Section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants from which the following paragraphs are taken:

Remember the kings, the princes, the nobles, and the great ones of the earth, and all people and the churches, all the poor, the needy, and afflicted ones of the earth;

O Lord God Almighty, hear us in these our petitions, and accept the dedication of this house unto thee, the work of our hands, which we have built unto thy name.<sup>47</sup>

At this point the singers, stationed in the four corners of the temple, together with the assembly, sang "The Spirit of God Like A Fire is Burning" with such emotional fervor as to bring to mind the record of the dedication of the temple of Solomon:

And it came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, -- and when they lifted up their voice . . . and praised the Lord saying, For He is God; for His mercy endureth forever;

<sup>45</sup> Cheville, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>46</sup> Fyber, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 89-91.

\*cont'd -- lady living in Fresno who is a grand-daughter of W. W. Phelps who has the most interesting collection of information about the old W. W. Phelps. She is a daughter of one of W. W.'s older daughters . . . she has an old piece of white satin on which is printed, in gold letters, the words of "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning," which was sung at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. I understand copies were printed in satin for some of the special authorities attending the dedication. . . ."

That, when . . . the glory of the Lord had filled the House of God.<sup>48</sup>

Truly, William Wines Phelps embodied the emotional fervor of this occasion in his hymn which continues to transmit the sentiment to succeeding generations. For example, at the Idaho Falls Temple, which was dedicated in the traditional manner:

President David O. McKay stepped to the pulpit. A slight stir went through the congregation. Moments before, President George Albert Smith had ended his prayer of dedication: "We now present this precious temple unto Thee, Holy Father, with all that pertains to it, inside and out, with our love and gratitude, and pray that Thou wilt accept of our offerings, and unto Thee we ascribe all honor, glory and praise forever through Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, Amen."

President McKay then led the congregation in the "Hosanna Shout" in the Idaho Falls Temple. The shout, and the "Hosanna Hymn" are traditional features of every Latter-day Saint temple dedication. They began with the Kirtland Temple when the Prophet Joseph Smith conducted the first dedicatory services.<sup>49</sup>

The ceremony continued by the choir singing the spirited hymn, "The Spirit of God Like A Fire is Burning," afterwhich the congregation joined the choir in singing the song.<sup>50</sup>

Preston Nibley comments on the song as follows:

. . . when Brother Phelps put those words together he really put together a grand dynamic song. There is nothing more thrilling than to be in our Salt Lake Tabernacle at Conference time and hear the people stand and sing, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

. . . how did Brother Phelps know that a fire was burning; it was because he felt it in his own soul . . . only a few people with wonderful souls can write these soul-satisfying songs  
. . . .<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Deseret News, Church News Section, April 5, 1958, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Nibley, op. cit., p. 3.

Another noteworthy hymn was also penned during W. W. Phelps' activities while at Kirtland in 1835. It was no doubt written while Brother Phelps was in sincere meditation during the sacrament on the Sabbath Day.<sup>52</sup> The name of this sacred hymn is "Gently Raise the Sacred Strain" which reads as follows:

Gently raise the sacred strain,  
 For the Sabbath come again  
 That man may rest  
 And return his thanks to God,  
 For His blessings to the blest.

Holy day, devoid of strife;  
 Let us seek eternal life,  
 That great reward,  
 And partake the Sacrament  
 In remembrance of our Lord

Sweetly swells the solemn sound  
 While we bring our gifts around  
 Of broken hearts,  
 As a willing sacrifice,  
 Showing what His grace imparts.

Happy type of things to come,  
 When the Saints are gathered home  
 To praise the Lord,  
 In eternity of bliss,  
 All as one with one accord.

Holy, holy is the Lord,  
 Precious, precious is His word;  
 Repent and live;  
 Though your sins be crimson red,  
 Oh! repent, and He'll forgive.

Softly sing the joyful lay,  
 For the Saints to fast and pray,  
 As God ordains,  
 For His goodness and His love,<sup>53</sup>  
 While the Sabbath day remains.

This hymn has been made nationally famous by the "Letter-day

<sup>52</sup>Pyper, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>53</sup>Hymnbook, op. cit., pp. 160-61.

Saint Tabernacle Choir" which uses it for a theme song on their weekly nation-wide broadcast.

After the Saints removed from Missouri to Nauvoo, Brother Phelps again wrote many beautiful hymns. For example, as the eventful year of 1844 was ushered in, the Prophet Joseph went to prayer meeting at early candle light. Following the administration of the sacrament he retired to his bed for the evening. At midnight, about fifty musicians and singers sang Brother Phelps New Year's Hymn under his window<sup>54</sup> from which I quote the following extracts:

Up, Up! for there's a fun'ral pass'd,  
And not a mourner seen: --  
Wake, wake! for there's a new year born,  
While all the world's asleep!

'Tis twelve o'clock, and all is well  
In beautiful Nauvoo:  
The old year's dead; the young one lives  
To bless created things.

What though the sects all worship, too,  
A shadow for a God;  
We have the living prophet's voice  
To show the better way.

What though the world is thunder struck  
At Joseph's glorious deeds, --  
We'll pray to God for kings and priests  
To reign with Christ on earth.

What though we're freemen in exile,  
Because we love our friends: --  
Eternal life's the great reward  
And who's afraid to die?

'Till eighteen hundred forty four,  
And Millerism's fail'd: --  
There's nothing like eternal truth  
To prove the schemes of men.

So, up! ye chosen of the Lord;  
 In spirit and in truth;  
 And wish the world a joyous year, --  
 A happy new year, too.<sup>55</sup>

It is interesting to note W. W. Phelps' allusion to "Millerism."  
 William Miller of Low Hampton, New York, commenced another form of Millennium propaganda in 1831, fixing the date of Christ's return at 1834, and then October 22, 1844. Subsequently, greater reserve was practiced in fixing a specific date, but faith in the early Advent of Christ did not waver. One scholar, it may be noted in passing, confuses the Latter-day Saints and their ceaseless effort to bring about a "heaven on earth," with the contemporary millenarians who pessimistically considered that God should "destroy this world and start over with a new one."<sup>56</sup>

Brother Phelps' Millennial views are characterized in another hymn that had its origin in this period of zealous adventism. It is entitled, "Awake! O Ye People."

Awake! O ye people, the Savior is coming;  
 He'll suddenly come to His temple, we hear;  
 Repentance is needed of all that are living,  
 To gain them a lot of inheritance near.

Today will soon pass and that unknown tomorrow  
 May leave many souls in a more dreadful state  
 Then came by the flood, or that fell on Gomorrah --  
 Yes, weeping and wiling and gnashing of teeth.

Be ready, O islands, the Savior is coming;  
 He'll bring again Zion, the Prophets declare;  
 Repent of your sins, and have faith in redemption,  
 To gain you a lot of inheritance there.

A voice to the nations in season is given,  
 The glories of Eden to show them again,  
 To call the elect from the four winds of Heaven;  
 For Jesus is coming, on earth He shall reign.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>Harvoo Neighbor, January 3, 1844, Vol. I, No. 36, p. 141.

<sup>56</sup>Wheelwright, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>57</sup>Hymnbook, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-91.

As during the Kirtland period, W. W. Phelps enjoyed a close association with the Prophet Joseph Smith at Nauvoo. This close association was the inspiration for the poem penned by Brother Phelps "Vade Mecum" or "Go With Me."

(From W. W. Phelps to Joseph Smith, the Prophet.)

Go with me, will you go to the Saints that have died,  
To the next better world, where the righteous reside,  
Where the angels and spirits in harmony be,  
In the joys of a vast paradise? Go with me.

Go with me, where the truth and the virtues prevail,  
Where the union is one, and the years never fail;  
Not a heart can conceive -- not a natural eye see  
What the Lord has prepared for the just. Go with me.

Go with me, where there is no destruction nor war,  
Neither tyrants nor robbers, nor nations ajar, --  
Where the system is perfect, and happiness free,  
And the life is eternal, with God. Go with me.

Go with me, will you go to the mansions above,  
Where the bliss and the knowledge, the light and the love,  
And the glory of God do eternally be?  
Death, the wages of sin, is not there. Go with me.<sup>58</sup>

B. H. Roberts informs us that:

After the martyrdom of the Prophet both the title and the phraseology of this hymn were changed by the author of it, to "Come to me, will ye come," etc., as it now stands in the Latter-day Saints hymn book, page 352, Deseret News edition of 1905; also the following stanzas were added by Elder Phelps:

Come to me; here are Adam and Eve at the head  
Of a multitude quickened and raised from the dead;  
Here's the knowledge that was, or that is, or will be,  
In the gen'ral assembly of worlds. Come to me.

Come to me; here's the mysteries man hath not seen,  
Here's our Father in Heaven, and Mother, the Queen;  
Here are worlds that have been, and the worlds yet to be,  
Here's eternity, endless; amen. Come to me.



Come to me, all ye faithful and blest of Nauvoo,  
 Come, ye Twelve, and ye High Priests, and Seventies, too,  
 Come, ye Elders, and all of the great company,  
 When your work you have finished on the earth, come to me.

Come to me; here's the future, the present and past;  
 Here is Alpha, Omega, the first and the last,  
 Here's the "Fountain," the "River of Life," and the "Tree!"  
 Here's your Prophet and Seer, Joseph Smith. Come to me.<sup>59</sup>

However, it was following the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum that William W. Phelps penned his greatest hymn in memory of his Prophet. Few men loved the Prophet Joseph Smith as did William Wines Phelps. After Joseph's death, he again took up his pen and from a heart of love and devotion wrote the following magnificent hymn that is sung by the Latter-day Saints today with much fervor and feeling:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!  
 Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer,  
 Blessed to open the last dispensation,  
 Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.

Chorus:

Hail to the Prophet, ascended to heaven!  
 Traitors and tyrants now fight him in vain.  
 Mingling with Gods, he can plan for his brethren;  
 Death cannot conquer the hero again.

Praise to his mem'ry, he died as a martyr;  
 Honored and blest be his ever great name!  
 Long shall his blood, which was shed by assassins,  
 Plead unto heav'n while the earth lauds his fame.

Great is his glory and endless his priesthood.  
 Ever and ever the keys he will hold.  
 Faithful and true, he will enter his kingdom,  
 Crown'd in the midst of the prophets of old.

Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven;  
 Earth must atone for the blood of that man.  
 Wake up the world for the conflict of justice.  
 Millions shall know "Brother Joseph" again.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>60</sup> Nibley, loc. cit.

This hymn was written by Brother Phelps from feeling which might be termed a "joyful sadness." It came from his experiences with the first great Prophet of this dispensation and his subsequent martyrdom, coupled with the inspiring hope of a future reunion with him. It came from his very heart and soul. Speaking of this hymn, Fyler says:

. . . . It contains a cry unto heaven against his martyrdom; a panegyric concerning his Priesthood and endless glory, which will take him into God's kingdom with the prophets of old. It proclaims that sacrifice will bring down the blessings of heaven; that the world must atone for the blood of the Prophet; that failure of justice will wake up the world in a conflict with intolerance; that Joseph Smith will be known in his true character -- a prophet of the living God.

The refrain is a shout of exaltation; a cry of satisfaction that traitors and tyrants will fight him now in vain; that his immortal soul, mingling with the highest, can plan for his Church and people, and that death will not again have power over him.

Originally the first two lines of the second stanza read:

Long may his blood, which was shed by assassins  
Stain Illinois while the earth lauds his fame.

When the Latter-day Saint Hymn book was compiled in 1927, in order to be in harmony with the "good neighbor" policy of the Church and nation, the second line quoted above was changed to "Plead unto heav'n while the earth lauds his fame."<sup>61</sup>

The dedication of the Nauvoo Temple on May 1, 1846, was the next great event, and as usual, Brother Phelps was inspired with the spirit of the occasion sufficient to write the following hymn which was sung at those services:

No! No! for temple's completed,  
The Lord hath a place for his head;  
And the priesthood in power now lightens  
The way of the living and dead.

---

<sup>61</sup>Fyler, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

See, see, 'mid the world's dreadful splendour,  
 Christianity, folly, and sword;  
 The Mormons -- the diligent Mormons  
 Have rear'd up this house to the Lord!

By the wisdom and spirit of Joseph,  
 Whose blood stains the honor of state;  
 By tithing and sacrifice daily,  
 The poor learn the way to be great.

Mark, mark, for the Gentiles are fearful,  
 Where the work of the Lord is begun;  
 Already this monument finished  
 Is counted one miracle done!

Gaze, gaze, at the flight of the righteous,  
 From the "fire-shower of ruin" at hand;  
 Their prayers and their suff'rings are wrath-ing  
 Jehovah to sweep off the land!

Sing, sing, for the hour of redemption --  
 The day for the poor Saints' reward,  
 Is coming for temp'ral enjoyment,  
 All shining with crowns from the Lord!

Watch, watch, for the blessing of Jesus  
 Is richer the farther it's fetched;  
 The wonderful chain of our union  
 Is tighten'd the longer it's stretch'd!

Shout, shout, for the annals of heaven  
 Will purify earth at a word;  
 And the Twelve, with the Saints that are faithful,  
 Enter into the joy of their Lord.<sup>62</sup>

#### Later Samples of his Poetry

In summary, the writer has chosen a few samples of W. W. Phelps' poetry written later in his life. To present the entire collection of his poems and hymns would require more space than possible in this thesis.

Typical of Brother Phelps' later poetry is the following poem which clearly illustrates the anticipated western migration of the Saints:

Oh the western world -- Oh the western world --  
 What a goodly, pleasant land is there!  
 Like a comely Queen, in her robes of green,  
 It shines the fairest of the fair.

Oh its prairies seem -- Oh its prairies seem --  
 Like the sea when the light wind blows;  
 And its buffalo, in a phalanx go,  
 As they run from their Indian foes.

Oh its Indian tribes -- Oh its Indian tribes --  
 Like the stars in the upper deep,  
 Are a roaming round, where the game is found --  
 And because they'd rather hunt than reap.

Oh its thousand hills -- Oh its thousand hills --  
 With the Rocky Mountains towering high;  
 Have their noble game and their ancient fame,  
 And the princely old Missouri high.

Oh its zephyrs bland -- Oh its zephyrs bland,  
 With its mystic, paradisaean powers,  
 Like a spirit throng -- they career along  
 And sweetly kiss the pretty flowers.

Oh the western world -- Oh the western world --  
 May its hardy pioneers find rest,  
 Where the setting sun, at the Oregon  
 Sparkles on the border of 'Far West.'<sup>63</sup>

After settling in the Great Salt Lake Valley, W. W. Phelps  
 penned "A Life in the Desert Plains." The following stanzas clearly  
 illustrate his feelings and the times.

A life in the desert plains --  
 A home in the mountain's breast,  
 Where the Indian rudely reigns,  
 And the hell is farther west.  
 Where the storm-king sorely rides,  
 In his flying, cloudy car,  
 With his nimble windy guides,  
 O'er the snow-capt mountains far.

Behold how the valley smiles!  
 The sky like a mirror's seen;  
 And the spotted mountain wilds  
 Is a world of evergreen: --

---

<sup>63</sup>The Wasp, August 13, 1843, Vol. I, No. 17, p. 98.

Where the hairy nations leap,  
 And the feather'd gentry soar,  
 In the clear blue upper deep,  
 As the rushing waters roar.

.....

'Tis life in a desert storm,  
 To lay in the sand or snow,  
 With a little fire to warm,  
 As the winds unceasing blow.  
 While the busy fancy paints  
 The awful what's to come --  
 But dismissing all complaints,  
 What a blessed place is home!

'Tis life for the desert cheer,  
 To hunt the grizzly bear,  
 When the wolves are howling near,  
 As they claim a mountain share.  
 But the bear comes whirling up,  
 And the thoughts of death and fun,  
 With a chance to shoot or slope,  
 Is a -- bang! and Cuffee's done.

'Tis life that the desert lends,  
 To think of the joys to come,  
 When we meet our wives and friends,  
 As they greet us welcome home:  
 In that day of living cheers  
 When the parting cometh not,  
 We'll sing of the Pioneers,  
 When the world's forgot -- forgot.<sup>64</sup>

W. W. Phelps dedicated one of his choicest poems to President Brigham Young. The historical background of this poem, according to B. H. Roberts, takes place when, in 1832, the Prophet Joseph said:

There are many kingdoms . . . and there is no space in  
 the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in  
 the which there is no space<sup>65</sup> . . .

---

<sup>64</sup> Deseret News, July 26, 1851, Vol. 1, No. 28, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 297.

<sup>65</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 88:37.

Brother Roberts further states:

That the extent of the universe is infinite and unbounded; that it is empty in no part, but everywhere filled with substance; that the duration of the universe is equally infinite and unbounded; that it has no beginning and no end; that it is eternity, may be said to be the settled and universal conviction of science today; but it was far from being such conviction in 1832 when Joseph Smith said the same thing in the passage here under consideration.

The doctrine was nobly embodied in verse by W. W. Phelps, . . . The one here quoted is one of these that could well be entitled, "Eternalism."<sup>66</sup>

If you could hie to Kolob,  
In the twinkling of an eye,  
And then continue onward,  
With that same speed to fly,

D'ye think that you could ever,  
Through all Eternity,  
Find out the generation  
Where Gods began to be?

Or see the grand beginning,  
Where space did not extend?  
Or view the last creation,  
Where Gods and matter end?

Methinks the Spirit whispers,  
"No man has found 'pure space',  
Nor vacuum yet discovered  
Where nothing has a place.

The works of Gods continue,  
And worlds and lives abound;  
Improvement and progression  
Have one eternal round.

There is no end to matter,  
There is no end to space,  
There is no end to spirit,  
There is no end to race.

There is no end to virtue,  
There is no end to might,  
There is no end to wisdom,  
There is no end to light.

---

<sup>66</sup>Roberts, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 387-88.

There is no end to union,  
 There is no end to youth,  
 There is no end to priesthood  
 There is no end to truth.

There is no end to glory,  
 There is no end to love,  
 There is no end to reign,  
 There is no death above.<sup>67</sup>

It is interesting to contrast this poem with a contemporary poem that treats this same subject of time and space.

Now reader, go along with me,  
 Away back to Eternity;  
 Go back beyond the days of youth,  
 Where everything that was, was truth.

Beyond the sorrow and the tears,  
 Beyond the suffering and fears,  
 Beyond the anguish and the gloom,  
 Beyond the shadow of the tomb.

Beyond all trouble and all pain,  
 Beyond all losses and all gain,  
 Beyond all sobe and bitter sighs,  
 Beyond the limit of the skies.

Before there was a ray or light,  
 Before there was a day or night,  
 Before a prayer was ever prayed,  
 Before the world was ever made.

Before there was a moon, or sun,  
 Before old time itself begun;  
 Before there was a now, or then,  
 Before there was a where, or when.

Before there was a "here" or "there"  
 Or anything, or anywhere;  
 Go back a hundred thousand years,  
 And farther still, though filled with fears.

Go back until within the past,  
 You fail to find the place at last  
 Where the beginning you can see,  
 At one end of Eternity.

---

<sup>67</sup>Liahona, Vol. 8, No. 9, Independence, Missouri, Aug. 16, 1910,  
 p. 144.

Go back until there's not a trace  
Of anything, but God and space;  
God all around, below, above;  
Unlimited in power and love.

Away back here removed from sight,  
Where everything that was was right;  
Away back here removed from sin,  
Is where my story does begin.

--The First Mortgage<sup>68</sup>

Note the superiority of Brother Phelps' verses, composed, as one may see, under the inspiration of the Gospel light. Another poem which touches upon the theme of eternity and astronomy is:

Who lives beyond the sky,  
And watches ev'ry one  
And ev'ry thing that's done,  
In this frail world of ours?  
Our Father's angels do --  
Array'd in garments white,  
Where everlasting light  
Makes one eternal day,  
In eternity.

Is there no space between?  
No pearl-edg'd, gorgeous cloud  
To part the just and proud,  
From what is done on earth?  
O yes, there is a veil  
This side of Paradise,  
Above the seas and ice  
That shuts us from the Lord,  
In eternity.

How long will this be so,  
And all the friends of God,  
That took a tour abroad,  
Be shut out from his sight?  
Not long; the time is near  
When all the holy ones  
And all of Zion's sons  
Will shout -- "this earth is ours  
In eternity!"

This thing we know of God,  
Beyond man's sense and might:  
"What ever is, is right."  
In all his wond'rous works,



His foes in heaven and earth,  
 With all their might and skill,  
 To plan, and cope, and kill,  
 Will find one common end  
 In eternity.

Summary

Thus it is as a writer of inspiring poetic hymns that the versatile William Wines Phelps excels, and for which his name will always be remembered by the Latter-day Saints. His songs are characterized for their strength or sentiment as well as for their divine inspiration. His poetic music is full of Gospel truths and themes which are most stirring when sung in congregational fashion.

J. Nile Washburn expressed his feelings about Brother Phelps as a hymn writer when he wrote: "William W. Phelps had no peer among his people as a writer of songs . . . ." <sup>70</sup>

Levi Edgar Young has written:

One of our sweetest hymn writers was W. W. Phelps . . . . His poems are full of sentiment, and sound the key notes of the faith and philosophy of the Saints . . . . There is a loftiness in his hymns that carries one to splendid heights of thought. In fact, we may say he was an idealist who attempted to carry his people with him through the medium of poetry. I hardly know which one of his poems I like best. One thing is certain. If it is the desire to fire the brethren of a priesthood meeting with zeal and determination, have them sing, "Now Let Us Rejoice in the Day of Salvation," "Praise to the Man Who Communed With Jehovah," "Glorious Things are Sung of Zion." As a sacrament hymn, "O God, The Eternal Father" is sung more often than many others, and it touches issues that are vital to the soul. <sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup>Deseret News, November 2, 1859, Vol. 9, No. 35, p. 280.

<sup>70</sup>J. Nile Washburn, A Critical Study of Latter-day Saint Poetry From 1847-77 (Unpublished Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1936), p. 118.

<sup>71</sup>Levi Edgar Young, "Our Hymns," Improvement Era, Vol. XVII, Part II, June, 1814, pp. 754-55.

## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to write a biography on the life of the versatile William Wines Phelps in conjunction with his contributions to, and influence on the issues and problems of Mormon Pioneer History from Kirtland, Ohio, to the Great Basin.

As a result of this attempt, the writer has discussed the early training of Brother Phelps in the field of journalism as an anti-Masonic editor; also the account of his subsequent conversion to Mormonism when he completely abandoned the cause of anti-Masonry to accept this new religious faith.

Following his conversion, the writer discussed his influences as the first Mormon editor on the issues and problems of the Missouri period. His contribution and influence during the Kirtland period were next brought out in conjunction with his experience as an intimate associate of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The writer then pointed out his harmful influence as an apostate at Far West, Missouri, followed by his sincere repentance and return to the Church at Nauvoo, Illinois. His close association with the Prophet Joseph Smith was again brought out in connection with the influences he had on the events that transpired during this period of church history. The writer next discussed the continued loyalty and support of Brother Phelps to the Twelve Apostles as the proper authorities to lead the Church after the martyrdom.

As the Church moved west to the Great Basin, the part played by W. W. Phelps was briefly pointed out when he traveled east to secure the Remage Press, which was to produce the first copies of the Deseret News in the Great Salt Lake Valley.

Next a discussion was given of the part played by Brother Phelps in the growth and development of the Great Salt Lake Valley, politically, socially, economically, religiously, and educationally, until his death in 1872.

Finally, the writer discussed W. W. Phelps' contribution to, and influences on Latter-day Saint Church history as a writer of poetic hymns.

This study has been extremely interesting. It was impossible to incorporate into this thesis the vast volume of information collected. As a result, the writer has endeavored to select the material which seemed to best tell the story.

The writer feels that the justification for a thesis of this type lies in the fact that history is made up of the lives of great men. The versatile Phelps was a great man. He played a key role in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and an important part in the history of the American frontier.

In conclusion, it is the writer's sincere conviction that this study establishes the proposition that William Wines Phelps, was an important figure in Mormon Latter-day Saint Church history as a Mormon Pioneer, an Educator, and a Writer.

## APPENDIX A

By tracing the genealogy of the Phelps family we discover that William's ancestors were among the first settlers of Connecticut. This family came to America on the ship Mary John in 1630 and settled in the young state at that time. -- H. S. Phelps, Biographical Sketch, (Manuscript in Church Historian's Library. It refers to 'Phelps Genealogy in America.')

Also the Phelps printed family history in the Genealogical Library gives interesting data concerning many of the early American Phelps and even traces the family into Tewkesbury, England. According to the record (and verified by other sources), the earliest Phelps ancestor of W. W. Phelps, who was born in this country, was Lieutenant Timothy Phelps, born September 1, 1639, in Windsor, Connecticut, and married Mary Griswold. The Griswold's also were active in early American history, and took a prominent part in the settlement of the country.

His father, Enon Phelps was born in Amenia, New York, November 18, 1766, and died on February 7, 1855, in his 89th year at Homer, New York. He married Mehitabel Goldsmith, who was born on April 12, 1763. She died at Homer, New York, on April 12, 1854, in her 90th year. -- Judge Oliver Seymour Phelps and Andrew T. Servin, The Phelps Family of America and Their Ancestors (Published by Eagle Publishing Co., of Pitt. Mass., Vol. I), p. 650, 1885.

Sally was the daughter of David B. Waterman and Jerisha Asset of Ohio.-- Andrew Jensen, op. cit., p. 692.

A generous sized family resulted from this wedlock, consisting of six girls and four boys, as follows: William Waterman (married Lydia Brewster); Sabrina (married Joseph K. Brent); Mehitabel (married Willis Dalis); Sarah (married Samuel Shaw); Henry Enon, (married Mary Catherine Mickeljohn); James and Jerusha who died as infants; Lydia (married Jemimah Varney; Mary and Princetta who died as infants.-- Esshem, op. cit., p. 1104.

## APPENDIX B

(Trumansburg) Lake Light, 1827-1829.

Established October 15, 1827, judging from the issue of November 12, 1827, Vol. 1, No. 5, by Phelps & Bloomer (W. W. Phelps and R. M. Bloomer) as an Anti-Masonic paper. By the issue of May 28, 1828, Vol. 1, no. 33, it was by St. John and Clark (Reuben St. John and Orsamus B. Clark). A notice in this issue dated May 7, 1828, announced the dissolution of the partnership of Clark and Bloomer, by whom it had been published. No later issues have been located, but according to Pierce and Murd, History of Tioga, Chemung, and Tompkins Counties, p. 234, it was published later by St. John alone until February, 1829.

MW ANN 12 1827; My 28, 1828.

(Canandaigua) Ontario Phoenix, 1828-1832

Established April 30, 1828, judging from the issue of June 4, 1828, Vol. 1, No. 6, by W. W. Phelps and R. M. Bloomer. With the issue of December 16, 1829, Phelps' name appears alone as editor . . . . From November 9, 1831, through August 29, 1832, Myron V. Hall was editor and publisher. The Ontario Freeman was its successor as an Anti-Masonic newspaper.

CSMH Ag 4 1831. MW A Je 4, J1 16, 1828; Je 16 1830. N Mr 2, Je 8, N 16 1831. NCanMID 16 1829; J1 7 1830-Ag 29 1832.--As quoted in a letter, to the writer, from Mr. Milton W. Hamilton, from his book, Anti-Masonic Newspapers, 1826-1834.

## APPENDIX C

In connection with the citations you give in your letter of February 10, regarding W. W. Phelps, I have a few comments and suggestions . . . .

I have noted the mention by Harry M. Beardsley, as to Phelps' political ambition. He gives no source but I believe this must come from the writings of E. D. Howe . . . .

Now as to the assertion that Phelps was a "self-launched" candidate for lieutenant governor of New York, I cannot find any verification. There were a number of persons by the name of Phelps in New York at the time either in journalism or politics. There was also an A. N. Phillips who edited a paper in Canandaigua in 1821. Your citation from Jenkins, History of Political Parties in New York State, refers to Oliver Phelps and is also of too early a date. The New York Civil List, which lists officeholders in New York, does not show that W. W. Phelps ever held public office.

-- Unpublished material to the writer from Milton W. Hamilton, Senior Historian of the Division of Archives and History at the University of the State of New York.

## APPENDIX D

The Star office, located in a two-story building on Liberty Street, south of Lexington, housed also the Upper Missouri Advertiser, a weekly newspaper devoted to general news and published by the Phelps firm.--Loy Otis Banks, Missouri Historical Review, (Vol. XLIII, No. 1, July 1949), p. 319.

Also concerning the Upper Missouri Advertiser, the following letter was sent to the writer by Loy Otis Banks: (Head of Department of English and Modern Languages at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, April 10, 1958.)

Dear Mr. Bowen:

I was happy to receive your letter of inquiry about the Upper Missouri Advertiser and the editor, W. W. Phelps, but I'm afraid I have little information of use to you. From my M.A. thesis I find only the following information about the Advertiser:

Title: The Upper Missouri Advertiser, 1832-1833

First Issue: August, 1832. Last Issue: July, 1833.

Periodicity: Weekly

Publishers: Independence, Missouri: W. W. Phelps and Company, August, 1832--July, 1833.

Editor: W. W. Phelps, August, 1832 -- July, 1833.

The advertising business was still in its infancy on the western frontier. In view of the opposition to the Saints, it was not likely that the established business firms would advertise in the Star's pages. The fact is there was little advertising to be done either in Independence or among the outlying communities. The Upper Missouri Advertiser must have assumed but a minor role among Church readers, since few references to it appeared in the Star.

The Star for August, 1832, merely mentioned that "in connection with the Star, we publish a weekly paper, entitled, The Upper Missouri Advertiser," which would "contain sketches of the news of the day, politics, advertisements, and whatever tends to promote the interest of the great West."

Sincerely,

/s/ Loy Otis Banks

## APPENDIX E

It is an interesting fact that the career of the Star's press following the Independence mobbing was unusual. It was destined to endure for almost half a century and to inaugurate three more newspapers. The Independence mob turned the press over to the firm of Davis and Kelley of Liberty, Mo., who began publishing the weekly Missouri Enquirer. In 1845 it was sold to William Ridenbaugh, who used it to establish the St. Joseph Gazette. Ridenbaugh published with it until 1859, when he sold it to a Captain Merrick, who is said to have used it to print the first newspaper in Colorado -- the Kansas City Star, Tuesday, February 17, 1948.

There is a discrepancy between this report and the two following. Suffice it to say that Ridenbaugh did obtain the press when he established his paper. They are taken from a comment on Brother Phelps in Work Projects Administration's Colorado (American Guide Series).

In a letter to Wendell J. Ashton: "It is a well-authenticated fact that the press and type of the Evening and Morning Star was thrown into the Missouri River at the time the paper was suppressed at Independence, Missouri, in 1833.

"In a series of articles by Miss Minnie L. Organ on the 'History of the County Press of Missouri' which was published many years ago in the quarterly magazine of this Society, The Missouri Historical Review, it is said that 'Later some enterprising driftwood harvesters raised the press and sold it to William Ridenbaugh, who used it to establish the St. Joseph Gazette in 1845. He sold the press to Captain John L. Merrick, in 1859. Captain Merrick took it to Denver and started the first paper published in Colorado.'-- Banks, op. cit., p. 122-23, Vol. 4, No. 2, Jan. 1910.

And also they published The Evening Star, (the first newspaper in the county in which appeared weekly installments of "revelations" promising wonderful things to the faithful, and denouncing still more wonderful things against the ungodly Gentiles. The result was that the Gentiles threw the press and type into the Missouri River.--C. R. Barns, The Commonwealth of Missouri, A Centennial Record (St. Louis -- Bryan, Brend and Co., Publishers, 1877), p. 241.



## APPENDIX F

Another incident happened at this time that is very interesting. "In 1833 at the time of the destruction of the printing press in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, the printed sheets of the Book of Commandments and the pied type and press were thrown in an old log stable by the mob. I asked Bishop Partridge if I might go and get out some copies of the Book of Commandments. He said it would most likely cost me my life if I attempted it. I told him I did not mind hazarding my life to secure some copies of the Commandments; he then said that I might go. I ran my hand into a crack between the logs and pulled out a few at a time until I got as many as I could carry. When I was discovered, a dozen men surrounded me and commenced throwing stones at me, and I shouted out. "Oh, my God, must I be stoned to death like Stephen for the sake of the word of the Lord." The Lord gave me strength and skill to elude them and make my escape without being hit by a stone. I delivered the copies to Bishop Partridge, who said that I had done a good work, and my escape was a miracle. These, I believe, are the only copies of that edition of the Book of Commandments preserved from destruction." Journal History, July 20, 1833. Historian's Library, Great Salt Lake City, 1858. John Taylor, (not President Taylor) in presence of Leo Hawkins, George A. Smith.

## APPENDIX G

All known accounts of the origin of the Ramage press on which the first copies of the Deseret News were printed indicate that it was obtained by W. W. Phelps on this mission. However, some of them apparently have erred in stating that Phelps purchased the press in Philadelphia and that it was brought to Salt Lake Valley by Brigham Young's first company of pioneers. The diary of William I. Appleby, describing Phelps' movements in the east while on his mission to obtain a press to be taken to the mountains, makes no mention of his going to Philadelphia, only about twenty miles from Appleby's home in Hacklestown, New Jersey. It was impossible for Brigham Young's first company to bring the press with the first company since his group left Winter Quarters about a month before Phelps departed on his trip to the East. On July 24, 1897, the Deseret News, in an article entitled, "Something of Ourselves" says: "During the winter of 1846-47 Judge W. W. Phelps was sent from Winter Quarters to Philadelphia charged with a commission to purchase a printing press, type, ink, etc. He discharged this duty and brought to Winter Quarters a small printing plant, such as in his judgment would serve the contemplated purpose. This printing plant was conveyed across the plains by the Pioneer company, and was part of the weight with which some of the wagons of the company were laden. Such at least is the statement made to the writer. The press was a small wrought-iron affair, known as the Ramage handpress, and the quantity of type which accompanied it was but small."--Ashton, op. cit., p. 13.

## APPENDIX H

Sally Phelps outlived her husband about two years. Concerning her death, the Deseret News, on January 7, 1874, reported that:

Yesterday afternoon, just at the time that heavy wind and hailstorm arose, Mrs. Sally W. Phelps, relict of the late Judge W. W. Phelps, aged about seventy-seven years, went into the yard at the rear of her residence, opposite the Townsend House to get a bucketful of water. While thus engaged three of the skylights on the roof of Mitchell and James' workshops were blown from the roof of the latter building. One of the workmen who was looking out at the window at the time saw one of the sash fly past her and, he thought, hit her. About the same instant she fell to the ground, and before she could be reached she had expired. Several pieces of fencing, signboards, etc., were flying around, driven by the wind in the locality at the same time, and may have struck her. The only bruise that appeared on the body of the deceased was a spot on one side of her neck. -- Deseret News, January 7, 1874, Vol. 22, No. 49, p. 459.

It is interesting to note that W. W. Phelps had at least two wives. Samuel Richards mentioned in his journal about Brother Phelps visiting him, accompanied by his two wives. -- Diary of Samuel Whitney Richards, 1824-1909, copied by Brigham Young University, 1946, p. 89.

The Deseret Weekly, in January, 1892, announced the following:

In this city, January 2<sup>d</sup>, of old age Harriet H., widow of the late Judge W. W. Phelps and mother of the Skidmore brothers of this city and Richmond; born in Philadelphia, August 8, 1808; migrated to Utah in 1855. -- Deseret Weekly, January 31, 1892, Vol. XLIII, No. 6, p. 200.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Alter, J. Cecil. The Storied Domain. Vol. I, The American Historical Society, Inc., Chicago and New York, 1932.
- Andrus, Hyrum L. Joseph Smith and World Government. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret Book Company, 1958.
- Ashton, Wendell J. Voice in the West. New York, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950.
- Bancroft, Hubert H. History of Utah. San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1890.
- Barns, C. R. The Commonwealth of Missouri. St. Louis: Bryan, Brend and Co., 1877.
- Bernard, David. Light on Free Masonry. Dayton, Ohio: W. J. Shuey, 1868.
- Barrett, William Edwin. The Restored Church. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, Seventh Edition, 1953.
- Burton, Richard F. The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California. New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1862.
- Cannon, George Q. Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet. Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888.
- Carter, Kate B. Heart Throbs of the West. Vol. II, Salt Lake City, Utah: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1950.
- Cheville, Roy A. They Sang of the Restoration. Independence, Missouri: A Herald House Publication, 1955.
- Clarke, James R. The Story of the Pearl of Great Price. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, Inc., Second Edition, 1955.
- Edwards, F. Henry. A Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1948.
- Eashom, Frank. Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah, 1848-68. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Pioneers, Book Publishing Co., 1915.

- Evans, John Henry. Joseph Smith An American Prophet. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946.
- Grant, Carter Eldredge. The Kingdom of God Restored. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1955.
- Hamilton, Milton W. The Country Printer, 1785-1830. New York State: Columbia University, 1936.
- Howe, E. D. History of Mormonism. Painesville: Printed and Published by the Author, 1840.
- Jensen, Andrew. Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia. Vol. III, Salt Lake City, Utah: Andre Jenson History Co., and the Arrow Press, 1920.
- Jensen, Andrew. Church Chronology. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1914.
- Latter-day Saint Hymn Book. Kirtland, Ohio: Frederick G. Williams and Co., 1835. Copy at Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Latter-day Saint Hymn Book. Liverpool, England: First English Edition, 1840.
- Latter-day Saint Hymn Book. Salt Lake City, Utah. Latest Edition.
- Linn, William Alexander. The Story of the Mormons. New York and London: The Macmillan Company, Ltd., 1923.
- McNiff, William J. Heaven on Earth. Oxford, Ohio: The Mississippi Valley Press, Miami University, 1940.
- Moffit, John Clifton. The History of Public Education in Utah. Provo, 1946.
- Neff, Andrew L. History of Utah, 1847-1869. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News, 1940.
- Parry, Edwin F. Stories About Joseph Smith. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1934.
- Phelps, Oliver Seymour, and Servin, Andrew T. The Phelps Family of America and Their Ancestors. Vol. I, Pitt., Mass.: Eagle Publishing Co., 1885.
- Fyfer, George D. Stories of Latter-day Saint Hymns. United States, 1939.
- Remy, Jules, and Brenchley, Julius. A Journey to Great Salt Lake City. Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields: By John Edward Taylor, 1861.

- Roberts, B. H. A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Vols. I, II, III, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1930.
- Smith, Hyrum M., and Sjodahl, Janne M. The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1957.
- Smith, Joseph F. Church History and Modern Revelation. Vol. I, II, Salt Lake City, Utah: By the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953.
- Smith, Joseph F. Essentials in Church History. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1953.
- Smith, Joseph, Jun. History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 6 Vols, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1932.
- Stenhouse, T. B. Rocky Mountain Saints. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873.
- Whitney, Orson F. History of Utah. Vol. I, Salt Lake City, Utah: Cannon and Sons, 1892.
- Whitney, Orson F. Life of Heber C. Kimball. Salt Lake City, Utah: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888.
- Young, Brigham. History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period II, Vol. VII, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News, 1932.
- Young, Levi Edgar. The Founding of Utah. New York: 1924.

#### Articles and Periodicals

- Banks, Loy Otis. Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XLIII, No. 1, July, 1949, p. 319.
- Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1851-1958.
- Deseret Weekly, Vol. XLIII, No. 6, January 31, 1892, p. 200.
- Frontier Guardian, Vol. III, No. 18, October 3, 1851, p. 18.
- Improvement Era, Vol. 45, No. 8, August, 1942, p. 529.
- Juvenile Instructor, Vol. 38, Salt Lake City, Utah, Deseret Sunday School Union, 1903, p. 206.
- Kansas City Star, February 17, 1948.
- Liahona, Vol. 8, No. 9, Independence, Missouri, Aug. 16, 1910, p. 144.

McCarthy, Charles. "The Anti-Masonic Party," Annual Report of the American Historical for the Year 1902. Chapter LVI, Vol. I, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903.

Messenger and Advocate, 1834-1835.

Messenger and Advocate, Pittsburgh, Vol. I, August, 1845, (Sidney Rigdon Publication.)

Millennial Star, Liverpool, 1846-1857.

Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc., News Clippings, 1831-1844, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

National Observer, Albany, New York, March 28, 1828.

Nauvoo Neighbor, Vol. 1, 2, 1844.

Ontario Phoenix, Vol. III, No. 14, Canandaigua, New York, August 4, 1830,  
p. 1.

The Wasp, Vol. I, No. 17, August 13, 1843, p. 98.

Times and Seasons, 1833-1845.

Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, Vol. XXXI, Salt Lake City,  
Utah: Deseret News Press, 1940.

Young, Levi Edgar. "Our Hymns," Improvement Era. Vol. XVII, June, 1914,  
p. 754.

#### Unpublished Material and Letters

Chase, Daryl. "Sidney Rigdon -- Early Mormon." Masters thesis, Department of Church History, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1931, Copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Cowdery, Oliver. Letter Book in the Huntington Library, Los Angeles, California, Copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Fitzgerald, John W. "A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants." Masters thesis, Department of Religion, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1940.

General Missionary Record, 1830-1855. Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Gunn, Stanley R. "Oliver Cowdery, Second Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Masters thesis, Department of Religion, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1942.

Hamilton, Milton W, Senior Historian, Division of Archives and History,  
The University of the State of New York. Letters to the writer.

"Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Mss.  
A day-to-day account of the history of the Church. Church His-  
torian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1831-1872.

Lichfield, Walter C. "Thomas B. Marsh, Physician to the Church." Masters  
thesis, Department of Religion, Brigham Young University, Provo,  
Utah, 1956.

Malin, Alice Phelps, 1025 Marilyn Dr., Mt. View, California. Material in  
letter to the writer.

McVean, Albert F, Town Historian at LeRoy, New York. Material in letters  
to the writer.

Olsen, Joseph William. "Biography of Erastus Snow." Masters thesis,  
Department of Religion, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah,  
1935.

Patriarchal Blessings, micro-filmed at Church Historian's Library, Salt  
Lake City, Utah.

Phelps' File, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah

Phelps, H. S. "Biographical Sketch." Mss. in Church Historian's Library,  
Salt Lake City, Utah.

Phelps' Letters, Genealogy Library, Salt Lake City, Utah

Poulsen, Wilford. A typewritten copy of letter given to the writer that  
was written from Bellbrooke, Ohio, March 4, 1840.

Romey, Thomas C. "The State of Deseret." Thesis for Doctorate Degree,  
Department of History, University of California, Berkeley,  
California, 1924, Copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Salt Lake Stake Records, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah,  
March 4, 1849.

Stowell, Lydia, 19092 Grove Place, Bloomington, California. Material in  
letter to the writer.

Tucker, Webster. Personal material, Brigham City, Utah.

Washburn, J. Nile. "A Critical Study of Latter-day Saint Poetry From  
1847 to 1877." Masters thesis, Department of English, Brigham  
Young University, Provo, Utah, 1936.

Webb, Ina T. "Congregational Singing in the Church of Jesus Christ of  
Latter-day Saints." Masters thesis, Department of Music,



Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1931.

Wheelwright, D. Sterling. "Study of Mormon Hymns." Thesis for Doctorate Degree, Department of Music, Baltimore, Maryland, 1943, Copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Whitlock, Virginia Marzolf. "Music in the Mormon Church During the Sojourn in Nauvoo." Masters thesis, Department of Music, Graduate College, State University of Iowa, 1940.

#### Diaries and Journals

Appleby, William I. "Biography and Journal," Reckletown, New Jersey. Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah

Cummings, Benjamin Franklin. "Biography and Journal," Transcribed 1933, at the instance of his grandson, Benjamin Franklin Cummings, Typewritten copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Hale, Heber Q. "Bishop Jonathan H. Hale of Nauvoo, His Life and Ministry." Typewritten copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1938.

Hammon, Appleton Milo. "Early History and Journal." Typewritten copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Huntington, Oliver B. Diary, 1842-1847, Part I, Copied by the Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah, 1942.

Richards, Samuel Whitney. Diary, 1824-1909, Copied by Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1946-1951.

Stout, Hosea. Diary, Vols. III, V, VI, 1846-1857, Typewritten copy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

#### Pamphlets

Phelps' Almanacs, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1854 Edition.

The Collector, Vol. LVIII, No. 1, New York, 1944-1945, p. 4.

#### Reports

Nibley, Preston. Creative Writing. Speeches of the Year, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, January 18, 1955.

#### Scripture

Doctrine and Covenants. Given to Joseph Smith, Jun., The Prophet. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study has been to write a biography on the life of the versatile William Wines Phelps in conjunction with his contributions to and influence on the issues and problems of Mormon Pioneer History from Kirtland, Ohio, to the Great Basin.

Prior to the year 1831, W.W. Phelps was active in the State of New York as an Anti-Masonic newspaper editor. The Anti-Masonic movement had grown out of the political environment that existed throughout the nation and especially in the State of New York during that period of time.

During the year of 1831, W.W. Phelps completely abandoned the cause of Anti-Masonry to accept "Mormonism." As a result, when Joseph Smith, W.W. Phelps and others arrived in Missouri, Phelps was called to be the first Mormon editor-publisher, bringing with him the same enthusiasm and skill to the cause of Mormonism.

The name of this first Mormon paper was the Evening and Morning Star, in which W.W. Phelps published important revelations and principles of the Church. In his key role as the first editor, William Wines Phelps represented the voice of the Mormon Church to the world. His effectiveness as an editor in spreading Church doctrine and principles could be measured by the enthusiastic letters of readers from virtually every state of the nation, and certainly by hundreds of converts.

The foregoing is characteristic of W.W. Phelps' energetic participation in the latter events of Mormon history. For example, when Phelps returned to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835, he made his home with the

Prophet Joseph Smith where he assisted in compiling the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In addition to this he acted as Joseph Smith's personal scribe in translating the Book of Abraham, and at the same time was influential in the completion of the Kirtland Temple. He also assisted Emma Smith in the first collection of Mormon hymns and attended the School of the Prophets.

It was during these early formulative years that William Wines Phelps' contributions in Latter-day Saint hymnology made his name immortal among the Church membership. His hymns, in congregational form, are still sung with great fervor and emotion by the Church today.

In conjunction with his intimate association with Joseph Smith, as his personal secretary, during the Nauvoo period, the important part played by W.W. Phelps in convincing the people at Nauvoo to continue to follow the Twelve Apostles as the proper authorities to lead the Church after the martyrdom was discussed.

As the Church moved west to the Great Basin, the part played by W.W. Phelps was pointed out when he traveled east to secure the Ramage Press, which was to produce the first copies of the Deseret News in the Great Salt Lake Valley.

Following this a discussion was given of the part played by Brother Phelps in the growth and development of the Great Salt Lake Valley. For example, W.W. Phelps contributed much as a key member of the Southern Exploration Company and in helping to devise the famous Deseret Alphabet. His contributions are manifested in his work as one of the first members of the Territorial House of Legislature and as a regent and teacher of the University of Deseret. One piece of literature that helped to make

the name of Phelps famous during the early days of Utah was the publication of his small book called the Deseret Almanac. He was also famous for his astronomical and weather observations that appeared periodically in the Deseret News.

It is the opinion of many that Phelps played a key role in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

*Ivan J. Bennett*  
*Sidney B. Sperry*