

## Chapter 14

# JOSEPH'S SCRIBE AND ASSOCIATE IN KIRTLAND

### TRAVELING TO KIRTLAND

Finally, in late April 1835, W. W. Phelps was ready to depart for Kirtland. Spring had come, and traveling would be much easier. He had wanted to leave several months earlier, but the needs of his family and those of the Zion Saints kept tugging at him. One need was of prime importance: Phelps's wife Sally had given birth to a daughter, Lydia, in their home in Liberty on March 14.<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later, when all of the family were doing well, William and Sally decided that their eldest son, Waterman, now twelve years old, would accompany his father east. The rest of the family would remain in Liberty.

Waterman could follow in his father's footsteps by learning the printer's trade in the church's new Kirtland printing office as a "printer's devil," an apprentice who fulfilled such tasks as mixing tubs of ink and fetching type. Indeed, Phelps had learned the printer's craft the same way when he was young.

Another reason Phelps waited until late April was to allow his close associate in the ministry, John Whitmer, to prepare his wife and young daughter for the journey. Sometime earlier they had decided to travel together. They chose the fastest route available to them in that era: water travel virtually the entire way.

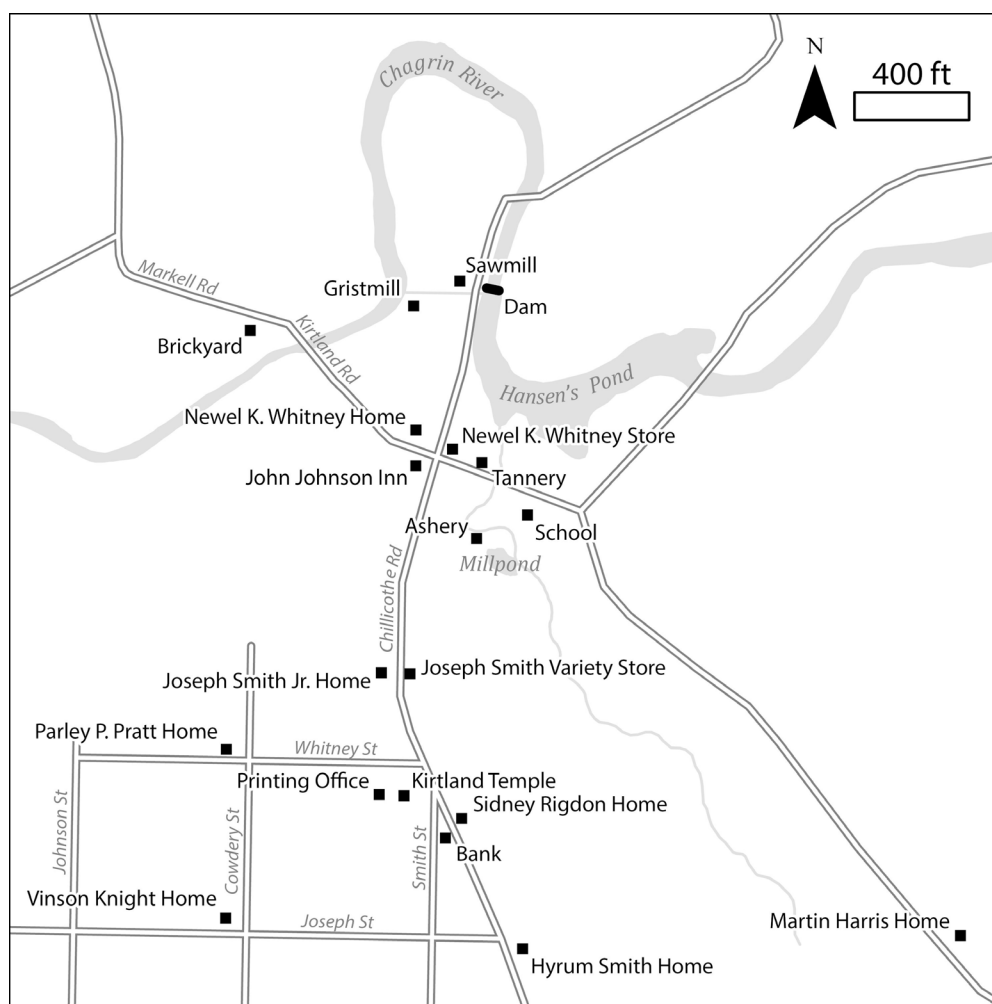
They left Liberty on Saturday, April 25, and on Sunday boarded the steamer *Siam* on the Missouri River and headed downstream for St. Louis. They spent two days in the city and then proceeded by steamboat down the Mississippi and then up the Ohio River. On May 8 they arrived at Portsmouth, Ohio, where they transferred to a boat that would carry them up the Ohio Canal to Cleveland. The latter part of the journey lasted until Saturday, May 16. About five o'clock that evening the weary travelers arrived in Kirtland, where the Prophet and his associates warmly received them.<sup>2</sup> "Our passage from Missouri

to Kirtland was not as quick as it might have been, but I thank the Lord that we got here safe," reported Phelps in a letter to Sally.<sup>3</sup>

William and Waterman were taken in by Joseph and Emma Smith as boarders. On the morning after their arrival, they attended Sabbath meetings with the Saints and rejoiced in the reunion with many friends.<sup>4</sup>

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IN KIRTLAND

Early the next week Joseph Smith called a council of the "presidents" of the church who were in Kirtland. This council consisted first of Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams of the presidency of the high priesthood. (Smith, Rigdon, and Williams served simultaneously as the Ohio high council presidency.) Oliver Cowdery had been ordained as assistant president on December 5, 1834, in fulfillment



*Phelps lived with Joseph and Emma Smith near the printing office and the temple. Map by Brandon S. Plewe.*

of a promise given back in May 1829. In this position, Cowdery was authorized to assist Joseph Smith in presiding over the whole church and would rank in the presidency above Rigdon and Williams.<sup>5</sup> The Missouri high council presidency—David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer—would also now be part of this “council of presidents.” Finally, two other brethren who had been called and ordained as “presidents” the previous December 6 were now members of the council as well. These were the Prophet’s brother Hyrum Smith and his father, Joseph Smith Sr.<sup>6</sup>

Phelps spent eleven months in Kirtland, from May 1835 to April 1836. At least weekly, he would join in council meetings with the presidents. Occasionally, one or more of these would be absent because of assignments elsewhere or ill health. During this historical period, this council of presidents was the governing body of the entire church.<sup>7</sup> Phelps had already developed a powerful bond of friendship with Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer and a good working relationship with David Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams. Phelps and Williams would become close friends while working together daily in the church’s dedicated printing building, which also served as a meeting place for the council of the presidents. Before departing Kirtland eleven months hence, President Phelps would share immensely intimate and uplifting spiritual seasons with each of these men.

Other important church offices had been created in recent months. The Twelve Apostles were first called and ordained in February 1835, while Phelps was still in Missouri. At this juncture, the Twelve did not preside over the whole church under the First Presidency. Joseph Smith informed the apostles on May 2 that they would not preside in the church where there were standing high councils (Kirtland, Ohio, and Clay County, Missouri). They would, however, have authority to preside over branches and conduct official business elsewhere in the church.<sup>8</sup> The apostles all went on missions to regulate branches in the United States and Canada and to supervise other missionary elders. The first seventies, along with seven presidents of the Seventy, were likewise called and ordained on February 28 and March 1, 1835. The Seventy served as missionaries under the direction of the Twelve.<sup>9</sup> Not until September would Phelps have significant interaction with members of the Twelve and the Seventy.

W. W. Phelps was acquainted with nearly each man who had been called to the Twelve and the Seventy. Most of them had marched with Zion’s Camp, and he had connected with them at least for two weeks in June and July the previous year. Phelps knew rather well six of the Twelve—Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, William E. McLellin, Thomas B. Marsh, David W. Patten, and Orson Hyde. The two Pratts, McLellin, and Marsh each had lived in Zion, at least some of the time, and had contributed significantly to the growth and strength of the church there. Patten had twice visited Missouri and conferred with Phelps and the other leaders in Zion. Phelps had actually known Marsh since 1830. Both had resided in Canandaigua, New York, when they were contemplating joining the Mormons.<sup>10</sup> Phelps had labored side by side with Hyde in preparing redress petitions for the Missouri Saints against the Jackson County mob and in going to Jefferson City to negotiate with Governor Daniel Dunklin and other officials.

# LATTER DAY SAINTS'

## MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE.

Vol. I. No. 1.] KIRTLAND, OHIO, OCTOBER, 1834. [Whole No. 1.

### ADDRESS.

As this No. commences the Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate, it is necessary for us to make a few remarks, and also inform our friends of the course which will be pursued in its Editorial department.

The closing Vol. of the Star, or the ten last numbers were published at this place; and for the matter which they contain, or at least, the Editorial, we are responsible. If the *principles* are pure, the man who embraces them may be guided in the way of righteousness; but if not, and we have not warned our fellow men of the things of the kingdom of God, or have cried peace and safety, when destruction was near, then, at the great day of retribution, before an impartial Judge, we must answer for the blood of souls! Of these things, no man is more sensible than ourselves. But the reflection is otherwise. To be sure, our opponants have cried an alarm, and used every exertion to hinder the spread of truth; but truth *has* continued its steady course, and the work of the Lord has rolled on: and where darkness once held unbounded sway, and cerruption prevailed undisturbed, the fruit of righteousness has sprung up and the children of men been made to rejoice with a joy unspeakable.

That this may continue to be the case we shall continue our exertions. We are aware that the work has just commenced: four years have been insufficient to warn all nations: this, in an ancient day was a work of *many* years. And though the word has been preached to thousands, and many obeyed, yet many millions are yet in ignorance; yes, many in darkness. The only marvel is, that God should have mercy on a corrupt generation, and

condescend to bring light and truth to light for their salvation. It is no marvel that men should reject it: this was always the case, because their deeds were evil.

Men labor for different objects, with a view to accomplish different purposes—some ambition, some pride, some money, and some power—but the *few* to save men. Only the few then have we had cause to expect, would show themselves friendly to the truth: only the *few* labor for that reward which is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and of course, from them only could we expect countenance in the arduous undertaking to instruct men in those things which are to concern them hereafter!

In matters of controversy, as we said in the first No. of the Star published in this place, we say now. The saints anciently were exhorted to contend earnestly for that faith once delivered to those before them; but nothing is there said of controversy. It may be doubted by some, whether controversy upon any principle is correct, or ever resulted in good: be this as it may; but above all things, if *you* must contend upon religious matters, the greatest decorum and propriety ought to be observed! A heated zeal without knowledge may hurl thousands into a vortex irretrievable, and lay a foundation for future generations, the end of which may bring destruction and death!

With these reflections, then, we cannot but deem it unsafe for men to enter the field of controversy against their opponants in principle, except they are *assured* of the correctness of their own system: this would be dangerous; and to avoid the evil arising from such an order of things, we shall not attempt

As the Twelve Apostles and Phelps grew older, Phelps would have a much greater association with each member of the Twelve, and each member in turn would have an enormous impact on his life. Phelps and the Twelve would be together in the Hebrew School in early 1836; in the events leading up to the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and the associated solemn assemblies from January through April 1836; in northern Missouri from 1837 to 1839; in Nauvoo from 1841 to 1846; throughout the westward migration across the plains; and in Utah for the rest of his life.

## EARLY LABORS IN KIRTLAND

Now that William W. Phelps and John Whitmer were in Kirtland, new assignments were in order. Joseph Smith relieved Oliver Cowdery as editor of the *Messenger and Advocate* so that Cowdery could labor closely as the Prophet's chief scribe and counselor and also direct the publication of the Doctrine and Covenants. John Whitmer, who had assisted both Phelps and Cowdery with *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Missouri, became editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*. Frederick G. Williams, who also ran the church's printing business in Kirtland, had already assumed editorship of the *Northern Times*, a secular and political newspaper the church had started in February to show support for President Andrew Jackson's Democratic Party. The church thereby was hoping to curry favor with the Jackson administration and be restored to its lands in Jackson County, Missouri. Phelps assisted in editing the *Northern Times* and was particularly helpful given his political background.<sup>11</sup> He significantly assisted John Whitmer in editing the *Messenger and Advocate*.<sup>12</sup> Phelps, with his vast printing and publishing experience, was called immediately to assist with the Doctrine and Covenants project.<sup>13</sup> As time went on, Phelps received numerous other assignments in Kirtland.

As the months progressed, Phelps and Cowdery worked together most of the time. They were already dear friends. In Kirtland they worked harmoniously together, as they had done in Independence. Both wrote for the *Messenger and Advocate* and the *Northern Times* and helped coordinate the printing office. They wrote a series of "letters" to each other (twelve by Phelps and eight by Cowdery) that were published in the *Messenger and Advocate*. Each letter was highly historical and doctrinal in nature, and the series has proven to be of immense worth to historians and others.<sup>14</sup> The pair led the way from May to August in bringing the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants to fruition. And both labored at Joseph Smith's side as scribes once the Egyptian papyri arrived in Kirtland in late June. (The story of the papyri and the Book of Abraham is told in chapter 16.) Both Cowdery and Phelps participated in a major way in the governing council of presidents.

Two days after his arrival in Kirtland, Phelps wrote the first of many long letters from there to his wife in Liberty. He missed her and the children greatly. Through his letters he gave counsel to Sally and the children, sent messages to other people in Zion, and recorded some of his most exciting and sacred experiences with Joseph Smith and other leaders. As the months went by, Phelps could see that these letters would constitute a valuable historical collection. "I have told you once or twice to take all my letters that I have written to you and lock them up. I want to make a book of them," he instructed Sally



several months into his experience in Kirtland. "My letters are my private Journal."<sup>15</sup> He also noted in December 1835, "According to my daily custom [I] prayed in secret for my family & the church."<sup>16</sup>

During his first week in Kirtland, Phelps composed his "Letter No. 7," a continuation of the series of historical letters that he and Oliver Cowdery were exchanging for purposes of publication in the *Messenger and Advocate*. Phelps expressed his personal desire to gather souls for the day when the earth would be purified. The kingdom of God, he boldly declared, was the stone cut out of the mountain foretold by Daniel and in due time "shall have covered the face of the earth; till, by the power of God, it shall have become terrible as an army with banners." To Phelps the millennial day was definitely near, and he was grateful to be part of the last preparations in such close proximity with the Prophet.<sup>17</sup> Phelps would go on to write five more such letters in successive months for inclusion in the *Messenger and Advocate*.

Phelps excitedly wrote Sally of his impressions of Kirtland and how it had changed remarkably since they were last there, in October 1831. Large numbers of people attended the Sunday meetings. Missionary elders frequently came and went. Numerous commodities and livestock were bought and sold. "Our brethren are so poor and hard for money that it would have been more than I could have done to maintain my family," he observed. "They keep the Word of Wisdom<sup>18</sup> in Kirtland," he also noted with admiration. "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."<sup>19</sup>

Phelps reported an unusual discourse delivered by the Prophet on May 31. "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 3 1/2 hours long—and unfolded more mysteries than I can write at this time."<sup>20</sup> This obscure reference lends credence to the notion that Joseph Smith from time to time publicly referred to his sacred First Vision experience, wherein he beheld the Father and the Son in 1820.<sup>21</sup>

Evidently, Phelps's close proximity to Joseph Smith allowed him the highly esteemed privilege of picking up on many new "mysteries." In one of his first letters to Sally, on May 26, 1835, he exulted, "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."<sup>22</sup> This was only the first of a long list of references in Phelps's letters to the Prophet's marriage teachings in 1835 and 1836. This note to Sally is probably the first Mormon historical reference to Joseph Smith's teachings on the eternal nature of the marriage covenant.

William truly loved Sally and his seven children and missed them terribly. Most of his extant letters to his wife in 1835 and 1836 contain expressions of love, devotion, concern, and counsel to his family.<sup>23</sup>

Whenever the "council of the Presidency" met to conduct business, Phelps usually served as clerk. For example, when a Reverend John Hewitt arrived in Kirtland in early June, the presidency had a long conversation with him. Hewitt claimed to represent the Irvingites, or the Catholic Apostolic Church, as yet a small denomination from Britain

that believed in the imminent coming of Christ and in latter-day apostles and prophets.<sup>24</sup> The Irvingites had learned of the Mormons from one of the church's publications that had found its way to Britain. The Irvingites had thus presumed that the Lord had raised up a people in America the same as in Britain. Hewitt had come specifically to Kirtland, he said, to see the Mormons for himself. But, according to John Whitmer, Mr. Hewitt "did not obey the gospel neither would he investigate the matter. Thus ended the mission of mr. Hewet."<sup>25</sup> Phelps, as clerk of the presidency, wrote Hewitt a follow-up letter.<sup>26</sup>

Another example of Phelps's clerk work for the presidents was a letter he composed that was signed personally by Joseph Smith to "President John M. Burk" in Liberty, Missouri. Burk was left in charge of conducting many affairs in Clay County. The letter instructed Burk and other elders in Zion as well as priests, teachers, and deacons in the Aaronic Priesthood. They were not to hold any church courts while the Missouri presidency was absent, but rather they were to care for the Saints in all their daily temporal and spiritual concerns.<sup>27</sup> Phelps then expanded on this letter and wrote a piece for the *Messenger and Advocate* entitled "To the Saints Scattered Abroad," giving the same general admonitions.<sup>28</sup> As clerk, Phelps also penned a letter on June 15 in behalf of Joseph Smith. Addressed to "brethren in the Lord," it requested funds to underwrite the publication of the "New Translation" of the Bible.<sup>29</sup>

Phelps assisted his friend John Whitmer in editing his first edition (June 1835) of the *Messenger and Advocate* by compiling news, writing articles, and submitting two new hymns. Both hymns achieved immediate as well as long-lasting popularity with the Saints. They were entitled "Adam-ondi-Ahman" and "Sabbath Hymn" (or "Gently raise the sacred strain / For the Sabbath's come again").<sup>30</sup> In successive months, Phelps contributed to the *Messenger and Advocate* with articles on doctrine, early Mormon history, commentary on current events, and several published hymns. His writings have illuminated early Mormonism for twentieth- and twenty-first-century readers. They also provide a partial window into Phelps's soul and personality that shows how zealous and fastidious he was.

There was at least one glitch in Phelps's relationship with Joseph Smith in 1835. In early November, Smith was caught up with numerous knotty church disciplinary issues that brought out contention among some of the leading brethren. Smith received a series of revelations that condemned the behavior and attitude of some of them, including Phelps.<sup>31</sup>

## DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

Since his arrival in May, Phelps worked consistently on the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Nearly each day, Phelps worked for a few hours with Joseph Smith in the Prophet's office in the printing building, where they arranged revelations for inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants. This proved to be one of Phelps's more significant labors while in Kirtland.

The brethren had earlier changed the name of the compilation from the "Book of Commandments" to "Doctrine and Covenants." The "Lectures on Faith" to be included in the publication signified "doctrine," and the revelations represented "covenants" in the new

title. The Lectures on Faith is a set of seven lectures that were delivered to the School of the Elders, often also known as the School of the Prophets, in Kirtland the previous winter.<sup>32</sup> Sidney Rigdon is now acknowledged as the chief author of the Lectures on Faith.<sup>33</sup> (These lectures were subsequently removed from the Doctrine and Covenants in 1921.)

Source documents for revelations to be included in the “covenants” portion of the Doctrine and Covenants are found in Revelation Book 1 and Revelation Book 2, handwritten manuscript books that are located in the Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah. Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer had taken the first manuscript book from Kirtland to Missouri in January 1832. This was the source for the Book of Commandments. Sadly, nearly all the page proofs of that nearly published volume were destroyed in Jackson County mob action in July 1833. Revelation Book 1 was almost entirely in the handwriting of John Whitmer, who had been assigned to the recording task before delivering that book to Missouri. (Whitmer saved this manuscript book from destruction.) The second book of revelation manuscripts was begun in 1832 in Kirtland. Revelation Book 2 is mostly in the hand of Frederick G. Williams, Joseph Smith’s then chief scribe after Whitmer had gone to Missouri. Oliver Cowdery and Orson Hyde also penned some of the manuscripts in the second book.<sup>34</sup> Revelation Book 2 also contains additional revelations to Joseph Smith from 1832 to 1835.

The brethren edited these manuscripts for publication. Handwritten editorial notes from Oliver Cowdery, William W. Phelps, Sidney Rigdon, John Whitmer, Frederick G. Williams, and Joseph Smith appear in both revelation books. Phelps’s most important contributions were to provide necessary punctuation and capitalization improvements, to give numbers to the sections (sections were used instead of chapters, as had been the case for the Book of Commandments), and to provide the versification for many of the sections.<sup>35</sup> Phelps and Cowdery likely did final editing for the Lectures on Faith as well.<sup>36</sup>

Almost daily Phelps worked with Cowdery in the printing office supervising the setting of type for the Doctrine and Covenants. Concerning those who worked with them, Phelps wrote, “We have, when all are in the office, three apprentices, and four journeymen.”<sup>37</sup> Waterman Phelps would have been one of the young apprentices. All the while, Joseph Smith and other leaders solicited funds from numerous branches of the church to underwrite this sacred publication. By mid-June the book was in press. The printing was finished in early August, and the pages were sent to Cleveland for binding since the church did not yet own a bindery. Phelps and Cowdery were surely pleased that their assignment to publish Joseph Smith’s revelations had finally come to fruition after considerable personal sacrifice. Their initial intent to publish the Prophet’s revelations had been thwarted by enemies in Missouri.

On Monday morning, August 17, a “general assembly” convened in Kirtland to present the finished Doctrine and Covenants (minus the binding) to the general church membership for their sustaining vote and to celebrate the successful completion of the valuable text. Joseph Smith and Frederick G. Williams of the presidency were absent from the meeting; they had gone to visit Saints in Michigan. The Twelve Apostles were also gone from Kirtland on missions. Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon of the presidency presided



# LATTER DAY SAINTS

## MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE.

Vol. I. No. 11.]

KIRTLAND, OHIO, AUGUST, 1835.

[Whole No. 11.]

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

*At a General Assembly of the Church of the LATTER DAY SAINTS, according to previous notice, held on the 17th of August, 1835, to take in consideration the labors of a certain committee which had been appointed by a General Assembly of September 24, 1834, as follows:*

The Assembly being duly organized, and after transacting certain business of the church, proceeded to appoint a committee to arrange the items of doctrine of Jesus Christ, for the government of his church of the Latter Day Saints, which church was organized and commenced its rise on the 6th day of April, 1830. These items are to be taken from the bible, book of Mormon, and the revelations which have been given to said church up to this date, or shall be until such arrangement is made.

Elder Samuel H. Smith, for the assembly, moved that presiding elders, Joseph Smith, jr. Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams compose said committee. The nomination was seconded by elder Hyrum Smith, whereupon it received the unanimous vote of the Assembly.

(SIGNED.)

OLIVER COWDERY; }  
ORSON HYDE, } Clerks."

Wherefore O. Cowdery and S. Rigdon, Presidents of the first presidency, appointed Thomas Burdick, Warren Parrish and Silvester Smith, Clerks, and proceeded to organize the whole assembly, as follows: they organized the high council of the church at Kirtland, and Presidents W. W. Phelps and J. Whitmer proceeded and organized the high council of the church in Missouri. Bishop Newel K. Whitney proceeded and organized his counsellors of the church in Kirtland, and acting Bishop John Corrill, organized the counsellors of the church in Missouri; and also presidents Leonard Rich, Levi W. Hancock, Sylvester Smith and Lyman Sherman, organized the council of the seventy; and also, Elder John Gould, acting President, organized the travelling Elders; and also Ira Ames, acting President, organized

the Priests; and also Erastus Babbit, acting President, organized the Teachers; and also William Burges, acting President, organized the Deacons; and they also, as the assembly was large, appointed Thomas Gates, John Young, William Cowdery, Andrew H. Aldrich, Job L. Lewis and Oliver Higley, as assistant Presidents of the day, to assist in preserving order, &c. in the whole assembly. Elder Levi W. Hancock being appointed chorister, a hymn was then sung and the services of the day opened by the prayer of President O. Cowdery, and the solemnities of eternity rested upon the audience. Another hymn was sung; after transacting some business for the church the audience adjourned for one hour.

AFTERNOON.—After a hymn was sung, President Cowdery arose and introduced the "Book of doctrine and covenants of the church of the Latter Day Saints," in behalf of the committee; he was followed by President Rigdon, who explained the manner by which they intended to obtain the voice of the assembly for or against said book: the other two committee, named above, were absent. According to said arrangement W. W. Phelps bore record that the book presented to the assembly, was true. President John Whitmer, also arose, and testified that it was true. Elder John Smith, taking the lead of the high council in Kirtland, bore record that the revelations in said book were true, and that the lectures were judiciously arranged and compiled, and were profitable for doctrine; whereupon the high council of Kirtland accepted and acknowledged them as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. Elder Levi Jackman, taking the lead of the high council of the church in Missouri, bore testimony that the revelations in said book were true, and the said high council of Missouri accepted and acknowledged them as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote.

President W. W. Phelps then read the written testimony of the Twelve, as follows. "The testimony of the witnesses to the book of the Lord's commandments, which he gave to his church through Joseph Smith, jr. who

at the special convocation. This conference was obviously a solemn assembly because those attending were seated according to the quorums and presidencies they represented. Phelps and John Whitmer, for example, sat at the head of the Missouri standing high council, whose members were present. Missouri church president David Whitmer was absent conducting financial business for the church in the East.<sup>38</sup>

President Phelps arose by prearrangement early in the conference and “bore record that the book presented to the assembly was true.” Several other priesthood leaders representing the Saints in both Ohio and Missouri followed with their testimonies. Phelps read the written testimony of the Twelve Apostles, which was actually originally the elders’ testimony of the Book of Commandments in 1831.<sup>39</sup> (This “Testimony of the Twelve” has appeared in the introduction to all editions of the Doctrine and Covenants since 1921.) The general assembly, by a unanimous vote, accepted the labors of the committee.<sup>40</sup>

Two additional documents were presented to the Saints in the conference. President Phelps read a statement explaining the church’s stand on marriage, and President Cowdery read a statement on “Governments and Laws in General.” Both were “accepted and adopted and ordered to be printed in said book, by a unanimous vote.”<sup>41</sup> The latter document still appears today in the Doctrine and Covenants as section 134. Although Cowdery is traditionally credited with authoring both documents,<sup>42</sup> the articles were probably coauthored by Cowdery and Phelps. As “presidents,” both men worked together daily on printing and publishing the Doctrine and Covenants under the direction of Joseph Smith. Both understood the Prophet’s thoughts on marriage and governments. Both had witnessed and marveled at Joseph Smith’s stirring discourse on June 21, 1835, on the patriarchal order of marriage. The subject of marriage appeared frequently in both men’s correspondence that summer. Phelps probably understood the role and workings of government as well as any member of the church at that time, including Oliver Cowdery. For example, Phelps helped edit the political newspaper the *Northern Times*. Since both men were fond of each other and enjoyed working together, and since both had an intense interest in the church’s policy on marriage and governments, it is only natural that they would have collaborated on both projects. In any event, Cowdery and Phelps presented these documents before the general assembly.<sup>43</sup>

The statement on marriage declared “that all marriages in this Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose.” It then outlined the solemnization procedure and a suggested wording for the marriage ceremony as it would be performed by proper church authorities. In obvious response to charges then being circulated in Ohio, the statement explained, “Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.”<sup>44</sup> Joseph Smith and his close associates would not be ready for many years to acknowledge the Prophet’s entrance into plurality of wives, even though evidence now suggests that 1835 is the year that he entered into polygamy.<sup>45</sup>

Some of the bound copies of the Doctrine and Covenants from the Cleveland bindery arrived in Kirtland the second week in September. Immediately, Brother Phelps wrote to Missouri, "We got some of the Commandments from Cleveland last week; I shall try to send one hundred copies to the Saints this fall by Br. Wm Tippetts. He starts next week. I know there will be one hundred Saints who will have their dollar ready, when he arrives. . . . I would not be without one for five dollars."<sup>46</sup>

Phelps explained in his same letter that a cost of one dollar was placed on each book so that those who worked on its publishing could retrieve a little of their lost income due to the destruction of the W. W. Phelps & Co. printing house in Independence. He also wrote Sally that he was sending copies of the book for her as well as for the three oldest daughters: Sabrina, Mehitabel, and Sarah. "I pray God, that [they] maybe made good use of for the truth's sake."<sup>47</sup> Later in January 1836, after the copies of the book arrived in Missouri, Phelps urged the Missouri Saints to "learn their duty from the Revelations. We must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, and not by what is written by man or is spoken by man."<sup>48</sup>

## A COLLECTION OF SACRED HYMNS

W. W. Phelps took a leading role in producing the church's first hymnbook. On September 11 he wrote Sally, "I am now revising hymns for a hymn book."<sup>49</sup> Three days later presidency meeting minutes read, "It was further decided that Sister Emma Smith proceed to make a selection of Sacred Hymns, according to the revelation; and that President W. W. Phelps be appointed to revise and arrange them for printing."<sup>50</sup> This was not a new assignment for Phelps. Back in Independence, Missouri, in May 1832, Joseph Smith had directed Phelps to "correct and print the hymns" selected by Emma Smith in fulfillment of revelation (D&C 25). Phelps composed many pieces for that original hymnal, but the July 1833 destruction of the printing office by Missouri enemies halted the book's publication. In September 1835 Joseph Smith resurrected the project and placed Phelps in charge of seeing it through to completion. Emma Smith is often credited with the authorship of *A Collection of Sacred Hymns*.<sup>51</sup> Emma compiled about ten existing hymns by 1832 and then added more in 1835. But Emma was not able to dedicate much time to her assignment because of persecution, frequent moves, poverty, bearing of children, and household duties.

Phelps took his assignment with the hymnbook seriously. Clearly, he is the one who finished the book and supervised its printing and publication. He not only loved to sing but also enjoyed composing poetry. Beginning with the first issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star* in June 1832, and continuing through the last Missouri issue in July 1833, Phelps published twenty-six hymns and placed them in four categories: "Selected Hymns," "Selected Poetry," "New Hymns," and "Songs of Zion." The five "selected hymns" were likely chosen by Emma Smith and were all later included in the first hymnbook. Phelps was the certain author of seven "new hymns," and he adapted or, as he was instructed, "corrected" the words to several more hymns, probably in some cases also selected by Emma. All but one of Phelps's compositions in Independence's *Evening and the Morning Star*

later appeared in the first hymnal. When the *Star* was reissued in Kirtland in December 1833, Phelps contributed at least four additional hymns. After the *Messenger and Advocate* began its run in October 1834, Phelps wrote for publication the words to eleven more hymns. All these appear in the original hymnbook.

*A Collection of Sacred Hymns* bears the date 1835, but it is obvious that it was finished no sooner than February or early March 1836. "The Spirit of God" was first published in the January 1836 edition of the *Messenger and Advocate* and appears in the same font type in the hymnbook. (All other hymns were printed in a larger font.)<sup>52</sup>

The songs in this exciting new hymnbook "present a picture of the faith, commitment, and hopes of the early Saints, as well as the doctrinal themes that were important to them. . . . With a prophet to lead them, [the Saints] eagerly awaited new revelation and joyfully engaged in spreading the gospel throughout the world in order that the faithful could gather as one in Zion."<sup>53</sup>

Back in November 1835, Phelps wrote Sally that Oliver Cowdery had been sent to New York City to purchase tools for a book bindery so that the church could be independent of other businesses to publish its own books as well as newspapers.<sup>54</sup> One of the first bound books thus put out by the church was Phelps and Emma Smith's little hymnal.<sup>55</sup>

Phelps also authored the preface:

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>56</sup>

The Emma Smith–W. W. Phelps collection was a pocket-sized volume containing ninety hymns. No authors' names were listed. Words were printed in stanzas without music. *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* was published in the same format as other denominations' hymnals of that era. As would be expected, the Saints borrowed tunes from hymns they had known as Protestants. Approximately fifty of the hymns were chosen from other denominations. Emma Smith helped select these other hymns.

Phelps's contribution was the writing of numerous Restoration-oriented hymns and the printing and publishing of the volume. Phelps is the author of twenty-five of these ninety hymns. Astoundingly, he adapted or drew from thirty-seven more hymns originally written by other composers. (Some of these composers, in turn, had drawn from yet earlier composers—a fairly common occurrence.) Some of his better-known compositions that appear in this hymnal are "Now Let Us Rejoice in the Day of Salvation," "Redeemer of Israel," "O God, the Eternal Father," "Gently Raise the Sacred Strain," "Adam-ondi-Ahman," and "The Spirit of God."<sup>57</sup> From the *Messenger and Advocate* we learn that both "Now Let Us Rejoice" and "The Spirit of God" were originally sung to the



tune of “Hosanna,” essentially the same music used presently for “The Spirit of God.”<sup>58</sup> Unquestionably, Phelps’s greatest legacy during this intensely spiritual period was providing hymns for the Latter-day Saints.<sup>59</sup>

## SPECIAL BLESSINGS UPON PHELPS

While in Kirtland, W. W. Phelps received two significant blessings that were put into writing. The first was a patriarchal blessing from Joseph Smith Sr., who as the church’s first patriarch had started giving blessings in 1834. In 1835 “Father Smith” blessed church leaders and elders who were coming and going through Kirtland at this time. Phelps was among the first to receive such a blessing, his being rendered on Thursday, August 27:

Brother Phelps, I have seen thee, and looked upon thee, and I have sought to know what to say unto thee; and I continue to ask my heavenly Father to give me his spirit to bless thee; and I also ask him to grant thee his spirit that thy mind may expand and comprehend the great things that are laid up in store for thee, if thou continuest faithful.

The Lord has looked upon thee from all Eternity, and known all thy works and ways. Thou art a pure descendant of Joseph, of the blood of Ephraim. Thou art a “speckled bird,”<sup>60</sup> and the Lord hath held thee up to be gazed at. Thou art a strange man. The Lord has given thee understanding and knowledge and wisdom, and discernment; and thou hast thought thou wast somebody; thou hast been exalted, and hast been lifted up: nevertheless, if thou continuest faithful, and humblest thyself, thou shalt see great things, and have greater knowledge. Thou shalt see the city of Enoch and shalt gaze upon in all its glory: yes, thou shalt be exalted to the heaven; and thou shalt be able to comprehend all hidden mysteries which have been hid up from the foundation of the world; yea, thou shalt understand things that have not yet been revealed unto man.

I seal upon thee a father’s blessing: upon thee, and upon thy children and upon thy children’s children. And thy wife, who is a pure descendant of Joseph, according to thy blood and lineage, shall be blessed with thee.—Her life and years are as precious in the sight of the Lord, as thine, and she shall remain as thou desires.

The Lord has chosen thee for a great work, and thou shalt be instrumental in bringing many souls unto the Lord; yea thou shalt present them spotless before the Father. Seek to be humble; seek to be righteous; live holy and work righteousness, and thou shalt stand amid the judgment that shall fall upon the wicked, unharmed; yea, thou shalt live through all the scenes of the last days, till the end, and then thou shalt be caught from the earth, up into the clouds and meet thy Lord, as he comes in his glory with all his holy angels with him; even so; for I seal these blessings upon you in the name of Jesus Christ: Amen.<sup>61</sup>

The second was a blessing that came from the Prophet Joseph Smith himself on Tuesday, September 22, 1835, given in response to a special plea from Phelps. This blessing follows:



Blessed of the Lord is bro Phelps for he shall have the desires of his heart in the gift that pertaineth to writing the law of God and in being an instrument in writing to lift up an ensign to the nations.

And according to the greatness of the desires of his soul for blessings of his friends so shall the blessings of the Lord come upon him to the uttermost.

The Lord will chasten him because he taketh honor to himself; once when his soul is greatly humbled 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 and blessed is his name among all nations.

He shall have part in that which coucheth beneath and it shall be revealed unto him things by the hand of the Lord's anointed, that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world concerning the last days.

And he shall be a blessing to his posterity from generation to generation and shall be satisfied in beholding his enemies cut off out of the earth.

He shall be filled with a fullness of the good things of the earth: with houses, and with lands, with the fruit of the vine and with the fruit of the olive, and it shall fall on the finest of the wheat.

And because of his liberal soul, the Lord will make him rich, even with treasures of gold, silver, precious stones, and withal precious metals.

He shall be a wise lawyer in Israel, for he shall understand the law of the Lord perfectly.

And the renowned among men shall acknowledge his superior wisdom pertaining to the law of the nations and kingdoms.

Behold he shall have understanding in all sciences and languages; and shall write and arrange many books for the good of the church; that the young may grow up in wisdom.

There shall remain for a memorial unto his name and the generations to come shall call him blessed.

His days shall be prolonged upon the land of Zion; and when he is old and bowed down with many years, behold he shall lift up his eyes and the heavens shall be opened upon him.

He shall be lifted up at the last day, and his rest shall be glorious. Amen.<sup>62</sup>

These blessings had enormous impact upon Phelps, and he would refer back to them often in future years.

## SCHOOL OF THE ELDERS

W. W. Phelps also participated in the revitalized "school of the elders" in the winter of 1835–36 held in the House of the Lord, or Kirtland Temple, as it was nearing completion.<sup>63</sup> On November 4 the Prophet dedicated and organized this school for missionaries who had been sent out earlier by the Twelve Apostles and who were returning to Kirtland because of winter weather conditions. Joseph Smith explained that he hoped the school would help the elders prepare themselves for the "glorious endowment that God has in store for the faithful."<sup>64</sup> About the same time, Phelps wrote to Sally, "The elders are coming

in every day from the east, almost. The school has commenced under the charge of Sidney Rigdon as teacher.”<sup>65</sup>

Among other things, the elders learned rudiments of ancient languages. Joseph Smith at this time was imbued with the desire to read “the word of the Lord in the original.” After Joseph narrowed the specific purpose of the school to the intense study of Hebrew, he stated on February 17, 1836, “I am determined to pursue the study of languages, until I shall become master of them, if I am permitted to live long enough. At any rate, so long as I do live, I am determined to make this my object; and with the blessing of God, I shall succeed to my satisfaction.”<sup>66</sup>

Phelps wrote to Sally, “President Cowdery has gone to New York . . . to secure some Hebrew books so that we may study Hebrew this winter.”<sup>67</sup> Before church leaders found an acceptable Hebrew instructor, the Kirtland schooling went on in other ways. On December 18, Phelps wrote his wife, “Great exertions are making in schools; besides the Elders school, there are two evening grammar schools, and one writing school; and as soon as the attic rooms are completed in the Lord’s house as much as one or two more will commence.”<sup>68</sup>

Finally, in early January, Professor Joshua Seixas, an accomplished Hebrew instructor at Western Reserve College in Hudson, Portage County, Ohio, was hired to teach the brethren the Hebrew language.<sup>69</sup> Phelps wrote, “The Hebrew school has commenced in one of the attic rooms in the Lord’s house. . . . I want to study Hebrew, and I have not as yet been able to begin.”<sup>70</sup> Phelps was not able to attend the Hebrew classes as frequently as his fellows because of his many printing, writing, and editing duties. But when he did attend, he evidently excelled. On February 19, 1836, Professor Seixas designated ten men as advanced Hebrew students, and for them he set up a special class: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps, Edward Partridge, William E. McLellin, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Sylvester Smith, and Warren Parrish.<sup>71</sup> The school went forward for eight total weeks, had approximately eighty students, and met nearly every day except Sunday.<sup>72</sup>

## PHELPS’S KIRTLAND CONTRIBUTIONS

As we look at William W. Phelps’s sojourn in Kirtland from May 1835 to the months leading up to the dedication of the House of the Lord in late March 1836, we are struck with his diligent service to Joseph Smith and the church in so many vital areas. Significant are his communications with his wife Sally about their family relationships, his work during this same time on the Book of Abraham, his contribution to understanding Mormon doctrines, and his participation in the preparation for the Kirtland Temple and its accompanying endowment. Each is separately discussed in the next four chapters. In all instances, Phelps loyally labored at or near the side of Joseph Smith, striving to bring forth the kingdom of God as initiated by the youthful prophet only a few years earlier. Phelps’s earnest feelings for Joseph, a man fourteen years his junior, and for Joseph’s prophetic role are manifested from these excerpts of a hymn written by Phelps in the fall of 1835:

Now we'll sing with one accord,  
 For a prophet of the Lord,  
 Bringing forth his precious word,  
 Cheers the saints as anciently.

When the world in darkness lay,  
 Lo, he sought the better way,  
 And he heard the Savior say,  
 "Go and prune my vineyard, son!"

And an angel surely then,  
 For a blessing unto men,  
 Brought the priesthood back again  
 In its ancient purity.<sup>73</sup>

## NOTES

1. W. W. Phelps Diary, March 14, 1835, MS 21921, CHL.
2. W. W. Phelps Diary, April 25–30, May 1–4, 8–11, and 16, 1835.
3. While in Kirtland, Phelps wrote a continual series of letters to Sally in Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. Many of these were compiled in WWPL. However, in more recent years additional letters and portions of previously published letters have been located and are also of great worth. They were donated by Stanley LeRoy Allen Jr. and Jeanne A. Clawson, descendants of Phelps, to L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University. They are identified as WWPP. The quotation cited here is from WWPL, July 19–20, 1835, 554.
4. W. W. Phelps Diary, May 17, 1835. See also "The Book of John Whitmer," in *JSP*, H2:79.
5. Oliver Cowdery explained this development of "assistant president" and his ordination to this office in a history that he had just started to compile for Joseph Smith. *JSP*, H1:32–37. See also *JSP*, J1:47–48; *JSP*, D4:191–200; MHC, vol. B-1, 562–63; HC, 2:176.
6. *JSP*, H1:37–38; *JSP*, D4:193, 200; *PJS*, 1:24–25, 189n1. In *JSP*, CFM:xviii, the combined Ohio and Missouri presidencies are called "a council of presidents." A footnote in *The Joseph Smith Papers* indicates that Hyrum Smith and Joseph Smith Sr. were also part of the presidency of the high priesthood. *JSP*, D4:282n355.
7. *JSP*, J1:58–59, 469–70; *JSP*, D4:371–78, 422–27, 441–42; *JSP*, D5:23–25.
8. MHC, vol. B-1, 589; HC, 2:220; *JSP*, D4:219–24, 301–2, 307.
9. *JSP*, D4:255–79.
10. During the latter part of his sojourn in Kirtland, Phelps saw a lot of Thomas Marsh. In a letter to Sally, Phelps related, "Elder Marsh and I generally see each other every day, and comfort one another by chatting on what is to be! What is to be when the Lord permits us to come home, and what will be when Zion is redeemed." WWPL, January 1836, 578.
11. W. W. Phelps Diary, June 2 and 4–5, 1835; Peter Crawley, ed., *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 1:51–52; Max H Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 4 (Summer 1969): 487–88, 491–95.

12. The *Messenger and Advocate* published three lengthy letters from Joseph Smith with instructions to traveling elders that demonstrate Phelps's possible ghostwriting or at least editing. *JSP*, D5:6–15, 53–60, 89–100; *TPJS*, 79–89.
13. MHC, vol. B-1, 592; HC, 2:227.
14. Cowdery's eight letters provide considerable insight into the Prophet Joseph Smith's youth; his early visions and other events leading up to his obtaining the plates; the joint activities of Joseph and Oliver during the translation of the Book of Mormon; and the reception of the priesthood keys. These letters were not only published in the *Messenger and Advocate* but were formally incorporated into historical documents compiled by Frederick G. Williams. They are published in full in *JSP*, H1:38–89.
15. WWPL, January 1836, 578.
16. WWPP, December 1835.
17. "Letter No. 7," *M&A* 1, no. 8 (May 1835): 114–15. See chapter 17 for a discussion on Phelps's view on the imminent second coming of Christ.
18. D&C 89 is the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom. It was received at a meeting of the School of the Prophets in the upper level of the Newel K. Whitney Store in Kirtland, Ohio, on February 27, 1833. Phelps was operating his printing establishment at Independence at the time of the revelation.
19. The quotations are from WWPL, May 26, 1835, 550. The elders' activities and the large Sunday meetings are mentioned in WWPL, June 2, 1835, 553.
20. WWPL, June 2, 1835, 553.
21. This is one of three early references of the First Vision as explained by Dean C. Jessee, "Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 23–24.
22. WWPL, May 26, 1835, 550; WWPP, May 26, 1835.
23. The Phelps family dynamics are discussed in chapter 15.
24. The Irvingites sent two other representatives earlier to meet Joseph Smith on February 28, 1836. See *JSP*, J1:190. However, this contact with Mormon leadership by Mr. Hewitt apparently was a hoax because recent research shows his alleged connection to the Catholic Apostolic Church to be fraudulent. See *JSP*, D4:339–41, 391n651. For a historical discussion of the Irvingites, including a subsequent statement ghostwritten by Phelps in behalf of Joseph Smith regarding them, see *JSP*, J1:190n391. The descendant of the Catholic Apostolic Church is the New Apostolic Church, which in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has had many congregations throughout Europe, especially in Germany. Phelps's meeting with Hewitt is mentioned in W. W. Phelps Diary, June 10, 1835.
25. "Book of John Whitmer," 84–85.
26. *JSP*, D4:342; MHC, vol. B-1, 594; HC, 2:230–34; W. W. Phelps Diary, June 14, 1835.
27. WWPL, June 1, 1835, 551–52; see also the letter and its historical setting in *JSP*, D4:326–33.
28. "To the Saints Scattered Abroad," *M&A* 1, no. 9 (June 1835): 137–38. See also MHC, vol. B-1, 593–94; HC, 2:228–29.
29. *JSP*, D4:345–47.
30. "Adam-ondi-Ahman," and "Sabbath Hymn," *M&A* 1, no. 9 (June 1835): 144.
31. *JSP*, D5:29–39. See specifically *JSP*, D5:38–39, 39n160, for the revelation condemning Phelps.
32. Regarding the Lectures on Faith, see Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990), ix, 1–21; *JSP*, R2:xxi, 313–84; *JSP*, D4:457–67.
33. Noel B. Reynolds, "The Case for Sidney Rigdon as Author of Lectures on Faith," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 1–41.

34. A massive volume in *The Joseph Smith Papers* is subtitled *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books* (referred to in footnotes as *JSP, MRB*). This volume contains photographic reproductions of each page of Revelation Book 1 and Revelation Book 2. The volume also describes the historical setting for these manuscripts and the editorial method of using the manuscripts for the publication of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Another *JSP* volume (*Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, referred to in footnotes as *JSP, R2*) contains a thorough historical discussion of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants contents and publication (*JSP, R2*:300–310). This volume also provides photographic reproductions of the entire 1835 publication (*JSP, R2*:311–593).
35. The editors of *JSP, MRB* published William W. Phelps's editorial contributions in the color blue and the contributions of the other editors in other colors.
36. Dahl and Tate, *Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*, 8, 10.
37. WWPL, November 14, 1835, 568.
38. The conference proceedings are described in *JSP, D4*:382–96; MHC, vol. B-1, 600–605; *HC*, 2:243–51.
39. See *JSP, D2*:97–98, 108–14.
40. MHC, vol. B-1, 601–2; *HC*, 2:244–46; *JSP, D4*:393–96, 394n199.
41. *JSP, D4*:396; MHC, vol. B-1, 602–5; *HC*, 2:246–49.
42. Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), 296, 348–49.
43. *JSP, D4*:475–78 contains historical background to “Statement on Marriage” as well as the actual document. *JSP, D4*:479–84 contains historical background to “Declaration on Government and Law” as well as the actual document. Authorship of the documents is discussed in *JSP, D4*:476, 476n7, 481–82.
44. *JSP, D4*:476–78; MHC, vol. B-1, 602–3; *HC*, 2:246–47.
45. Current scholarship indicates that Joseph Smith first practiced plural marriage in 1834 or 1835. See Danel W. Bachman, “New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage,” *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 19–32; Richard S. Van Wagoner, “Mormon Polyandry in Nauvoo,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 70; B. Carmon Hardy, *Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy, Its Origin, Practice, and Demise* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark, 2007), 42–43. According to T. B. H. Stenhouse, “Elder W. W. Phelps said in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, in 1862, that while Joseph was translating the Book of Abraham, in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835, from the papyrus found with the Egyptian mummies, the Prophet became impressed with the idea that polygamy would yet become an institution of the Mormon Church.” T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York: D. Appleton, 1873), 182.
46. WWPL, September 16, 1835, 566.
47. WWPL, September 16, 1835, 566.
48. WWPL, January 1836, 578.
49. WWPL, September 11, 1835, 563.
50. *JSP, D4*:413–15; MHC, vol. B-1, 612; *HC*, 2:273.
51. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, “Elect Lady,” Polygamy's Foe* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 57–58; Carol Cornwall Madsen, “The ‘Elect Lady’ Revelation (D&C 25): Its Historical and Doctrinal Context,” in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Craig K. Manscill (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 117–33. Most historical references to the first hymnal simply refer to Emma Smith as if she were the sole compiler.
52. Peter L. Crawley, in “The Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 503–4, was the



- first to identify 1836 as the publication year of the hymnbook. See also Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 1:57–59. The hymn “The Spirit of God” first appeared as “Hosanna to God and the Lamb,” *M&A* 2, no. 4 (January 1836): 256. The hymnal was likely available for the temple dedication since references to it appear in Joseph Smith’s journal entries that report the dedicatory proceedings. See also *JSP*, J1:203–4; Mary D. Poulter, “Doctrines of Faith and Hope Found in Emma Smith’s 1835 Hymnbook,” *BYU Studies* 37, no. 2 (1997–98): 32.
53. Poulter, “Doctrines of Hope,” 47.
  54. WWPL, November 14, 1835, 568.
  55. The book bore the title of *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*. The frontispiece adds, “Selected by Emma Smith. Kirtland, Ohio. Printed by F. G. Williams and co. 1835.” The entire book has been digitally reproduced and appears online at <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/1>. In 1973 the Herald Publishing House, the official publishing company of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ), in Independence, Missouri, produced a Herald Heritage Reprint of *A Collection of Sacred Hymns*. The small book was printed and bound as it appeared in 1836. The LDS Church owns a copy of the hymnbook that belonged to Sally Phelps. Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 1:57–59. References in footnotes to this hymnal will be cited as *Sacred Hymns*.
  56. *Sacred Hymns*, iii–iv. The writing style is definitely that of Phelps. Emma Smith was never known to be a writer, so she is less likely to have written a formal preface anyway. Peter Crawley states that the “preface . . . was certainly written by Phelps.” Crawley, “Bibliography,” 504; and Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 1:59.
  57. Michael Hicks, in *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 10–14, 18–24, discusses the preparations for and the publication of this first hymnbook. See also Wade Kotter, “Non-LDS Influences on LDS Hymnody,” presentation at Hymn Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, July 23, 2015; Wade Kotter, “The Evangelical Context of Early Latter Day Saint Hymnody,” paper delivered at the John Whitmer Historical Association Annual Conference, Kirtland, Ohio, September 23, 2016. Hicks, Kotter, and my own research at <http://www.hymnary.org/> helped me identify authors and adaptations in *Sacred Hymns*.
  58. “Tune-Hosanna,” *M&A* 2, no. 6 (March 1836): 280. The tune “Hosanna” is sometimes identified by the name of “Assembly,” which name is used for “The Spirit of God” in the modern LDS hymnal, *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985).
  59. Chapter 31 herein analyzes Phelps’s hymns more thoroughly.
  60. Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* has this entry: “*Speckled bird*, a denomination given to a person of doubtful character or principles.” I believe that Joseph Smith Sr. used “speckled bird” regarding Phelps to refer to his strange and eccentric demeanor that invited ridicule and not to his being unscrupulous. Jeremiah 12:9 refers to a “speckled bird.” “Has not my inheritance become to me like a speckled bird of prey that other birds of prey surround and attack?” (New International Version).
  61. Patriarchal Blessings Book 2, 221, CHL. The scribe for this blessing was Oliver Cowdery. For clarification regarding these early blessings, see *JSP*, D4:428.
  62. W. W. Phelps Diary, no date, contains the text in the paragraph order shown above. Oliver Cowdery was the scribe for this blessing, which text (without paragraph structure) is found in *JSP*, D4:435–36. See also *JSP*, J1:61n30, 62; *JSP*, H1:94, 94n166. Three other leaders of the church from Missouri received such blessings from Joseph Smith Jr. on September 22, 1835—namely, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and John Corril.
  63. Chapter 18 deals with the complete Kirtland Temple story.

64. MHC, vol. B-1, 635; *PJS*, 1:21; *HC*, 2:301. See also Davis Bitton, "Kirtland as a Center of Missionary Activity, 1830–1838," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 497–516.
65. WWPL, November 14, 1835, 568.
66. *JSP*, J1:186; MHC, vol. B-1, 705; *PJS*, 2:176; *HC*, 2:396. For a similar reference by Joseph Smith on studying the Bible in its original language, see *JSP*, J1:164. For Joseph Smith's journal references to the study of Hebrew, beginning November 21, 1835, and before the formal opening of the Hebrew School on January 26, 1836, see *JSP*, J1:107, 116–17, 137, 143, 145, 151, 161, 164; *JSP*, H1:131, 139–40, 160, 167, 173, 183. He also studied Greek on December 23, 1835; see *JSP*, J1:135; *JSP*, H1:159. Samuel Brown, in "The Translator and the Ghostwriter: Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 26–62, discusses the ardent interest, even obsession, that both Joseph Smith and Phelps had toward learning and using other languages, both ancient and modern. See especially pp. 28–38. For even more recent scholarship regarding Joseph Smith's quest for an understanding of ancient biblical languages, see *JSP*, D5:4–6; Richard Lyman Bushman, "Joseph Smith and the Study of Antiquity," in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2015), 3–22; Matthew J. Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original,'" in Blumell, Grey, and Hedges, *Approaching Antiquity*, 239–302.
67. WWPL, November 14, 1835, 568. This is the same trip to New York that Cowdery made to obtain tools for the book bindery mentioned above.
68. WWPL, December 18, 1835, 570.
69. For information on Seixas, see *JSP*, H1:168, 427; *JSP*, J1:145n248; Grey, "'Word of the Lord in the Original,'" 262–71.
70. WWPL, January 5, 1836, 572–73.
71. *JSP*, J1:187; MHC, vol. B-1, 705–6; *PJS*, 2:177; *HC*, 2:397.
72. *JSP*, J1:173n337; *JSP*, D5:173–75, 214–16. Phelps's earlier knowledge of rudimentary Hebrew, Seixas's teaching methods, Phelps's better-than-average talent in his Hebrew studies, and the effect of Phelps's knowledge of Hebrew after this instruction are discussed in Grey, "'Word of the Lord in the Original,'" 249–302.
73. "Hymns," *M&A* 2, no. 1 (October 1835): 208; *Sacred Hymns*, 33–34; "Now We'll Sing with One Accord," in *Hymns*, no. 25.