

Chapter 27

INTERPRETER OF JOSEPH SMITH'S NAUVOO DOCTRINES

As discussed earlier, W. W. Phelps is hailed as a doctrinal exponent from 1831 to 1836.¹ From 1842 to 1846, Phelps matched his earlier significance in this area with his writing and publishing of scores of doctrinal treatises, explanations, and poetry in the Nauvoo press. However, Phelps's contributions have largely gone unnoticed.² Many of his writings were previously believed to be written by Joseph Smith himself while in reality Phelps was the ghostwriter.³

In Nauvoo, Mormon doctrine expanded immensely. New dogmas introduced at that time, even though they were refined over time, remained in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the early twenty-first century, Mormons are identified largely by their building of temples, their focus on marriages and family ties that extend into eternity, their claims of ongoing revelation and divine priesthood authority, their proclaiming a concept of God different from that of other Christians, their living exemplary lives, and their seeking proselytes in all the world. Each of these concepts has powerful Nauvoo roots. In Nauvoo, Smith's teachings often took the form of public addresses to the Saints (mostly on Sundays and in conferences) and doctrinal articles that appeared in the *Times and Seasons*. W. W. Phelps published and interpreted these newly revealed doctrines and practices while praising Joseph Smith as the prophetic voice that brought them forth.

Phelps often presented theological ideas orally in conversations and sermons.⁴ But it is in his writings that we can ferret out his thoughts and means of presentation. Naturally, he intermixed the various doctrines in his treatises. The subjects, though handled separately in this chapter, are interrelated. Of course, these topics had some roots earlier than Nauvoo and later were refined. Yet each was significant in the Nauvoo period, and Phelps had his distinguishable hand in every one of them.⁵ Many of Phelps's quotations in this chapter are lengthy, but they represent only a small fraction of his many comments.

VASTNESS OF ETERNITY

Joseph Smith was greatly impressed by what he learned about the vastness of eternity. More than a few times, he, like ancient prophets and apostles, was privileged to gaze into the past, present, and future. He then recorded or spoke about his experiences. Some of these revelations appeared in canonized scripture. The lengthy vision and revelation known at the time as “The Vision” (D&C 76) was perhaps the greatest of these experiences.

W. W. Phelps became enamored with contents of this vision as soon as he received a handwritten copy in 1832. Immediately he published it in *The Evening and the Morning Star*. Phelps frequently referred to this glorious revelation in his published writings. As soon as he started printing and writing for the *Times and Seasons*, Phelps mused how “The Vision” could be put into poetic form. He worked on this project gradually until on February 1, 1843, he published his own poem that invited the Prophet to provide detail to eternal themes. Phelps immediately published a poem entitled “The Answer” in the name of Joseph Smith, although it is now widely acknowledged to have been penned by Phelps.

Phelps’s introductory poem, “Vade Mecum [Go with Me],” is as follows:

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, nor a nat’ral eye see
 What *the Lord has prepar’d for the just.* Go with me.

Go with me where there is no destruction or war;
Neither tyrants, or sland’rers, or 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.⁶

Following are samples from the seventy-eight stanzas of verse in “The Answer,” written by Phelps in behalf of Joseph Smith to mirror the lengthy vision. Phelps labeled each stanza with a number and included additional insights that were revealed subsequent to the 1832 vision. The newer doctrines are in italics.

11. I, Joseph, the prophet, in spirit beheld,
 And the eyes of the inner man truly did see
Eternity sketch’d in a vision from God,
Of what was, and now is, and yet is to be.

12. *Those things which the Father ordained of old,
Before the world was, or a system had run,—
Through Jesus the Maker and Savior of all;
The only begotten, (Messiah) his son.*

13. *Of whom I bear record, as all prophets have,
And the record I bear is the fulness,—yea even
The truth of the gospel of Jesus—the Christ,
With whom I convers'd, in the vision of heav'n.*

.....

32. *The myst'ry of Godliness truly is great;—
The past, and the present, and what is to be;
And this is the gospel—glad tidings to all,
Which the voice from the heavens bore record to me:*

33. *That he came to the world in the middle of time,
To lay down his life for his friends and his foes,
And bear away sin as a mission of love;
And sanctify earth for a blessed repose.*

34. *'Tis decreed, that he'll save all the work of his hands,
And sanctify them by his own precious blood
And purify earth for the Sabbath of rest,
By the agent of fire, as it was by the flood.*

.....

43. *For these overcome, by their faith and their works,
Being tried in their life-time, as purified gold,
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,
By men called of God, as was Aaron of old.*

44. *They are they, of the church of the first born of God,—
And unto whose hands he committeth all things;
For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n,
And reign with the Savior, as priests, and as kings.*

45. *They're priests of the order of Melchisedek,
Like Jesus, (from whom is this highest reward,)
Receiving a fulness of glory and light;
As written: *They're Gods*; even sons of the Lord.*

46. *So all things are theirs; yea, of life, or of death;
Yea, whether things now, or to come, all are theirs,
And they are the Savior's, and he is the Lord's,
Having overcome all, as eternity's heirs.*

47. 'Tis wisdom that man never glory in man,
 But give God the glory for all that he hath;
 For the righteous will walk in the presence of God,
 While the wicked are trod under foot in his wrath.

48. These are they that arise in their bodies of flesh,
 When the trump of the first resurrection shall sound;
 These are they that come up to Mount Zion, in life,
 Where the blessings and gifts of the spirit abound.

.....

55. *To spirits in prison the Savior once preach'd,*
 And taught them the gospel, with powers afresh;
And then were the living baptiz'd for their dead,
 That they might be judg'd as if men in the flesh.

56. These are they that are hon'able men of the earth;
 Who were blinded and dup'd by the cunning of men:
 They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first;
 But did, *when they heard it in prison, again.*

.....

77. But the great things of God, which he show'd unto me,
 Unlawful to utter, I dare not declare;
They surpass all the wisdom and greatness of men,
And only are seen, as has Paul, where they are.

78. I will go, I will go, while the secret of life,
Is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell;
Is leaving on earth, and a budding in space:—
 I will go, I will go, with you, brother, farewell.⁷

“The Answer” indeed employed inspiring verse. Many Mormons have drawn from it to expound on lofty doctrines of “The Vision” (D&C 76). It can be demonstrated, however, that Phelps expanded the original revelation’s ideas to a distinct degree.⁸

Phelps provided more ideas on the length of eternity in a fictional piece, “Paracletes” (paracletes are holy ones or Gods who come to earth to uplift humankind). Phelps wrote of many personages whom he identified as paracletes in his story. They had become Gods on their own and were prepared to build their own kingdoms. This would eventuate, he declared, in “*innumerable multiplicity of kingdoms, or spheres for action, with beings and animals in proportion, and time, times, eternity and eternities, for a full development of the qualities and powers of each.*”⁹

NATURE OF GOD AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS CHILDREN

The vastness of eternity is closely related to Joseph Smith's teachings of the nature of God and his relationship with his children. The Prophet frequently taught these vital subjects, but his so-called King Follett discourse delivered at a general conference on April 7, 1844, is perhaps the most significant sermon of his life.¹⁰ On June 16, 1844, Joseph Smith expanded the doctrine of Deity further by declaring that a plurality of righteous Gods exists.¹¹

Before these noteworthy discourses, W. W. Phelps was already into full stride with his interpretative teachings about the nature of God and his relationship with his children. For example, in the *Times and Seasons* from January 16, 1843, Phelps stated the following:

There is a depth, a dignity and glory connected with this subject that very few have had any idea of; but when rightly understood it had a tendency to enlarge the heart, expand the capacity, to give us just, and comprehensive views of the plans of Jehovah, and it justifies the ways of God to man. . . .

If a man is a son of God, he can comprehend the things of God, enter into the designs of Jehovah, unravel the mysteries of the kingdom of God and contemplate the future designs of the Great I Am, as they shall roll forth in all their dignity, and majesty, and glory, and this they do not profess to enjoy.¹²

Later in the same year, Phelps waxed eloquent about the "mystery of Godliness" when he contrasted God's revelations in the last days with teachings of worldly philosophers.

There is nothing perhaps, that is more talked or written about, or that is made a subject of critical, if not of philosophical research, than the subject of godliness; and there is nothing that evades the grasp of human intellect, and outstrips the genius of the most profoundly wise, so much as that subject. The geologist may dig into the bowels of the earth, and open the different strata of minerals; the d[e]composition of vegetable matter; the process of p[u]trefaction; the various changes of the different strata; and the length of time that it takes to effect those changes: together with the various specimens of timber, shells, bones, fossils, &c., &c., form sufficient data whereon to found an hypothesis that must lead to certain conclusions pertaining to the organization, age and revolutions of the earth. *But he may at the same time be most egregiously ignorant of the principles of godliness.* The Astronomer may make himself acquainted with the heavenly bodies; understand perfectly the motions of the solar system; and with the capacious mind of a Newton or Herschell, dig out and unravel the mysterious windings of the celestial spheres, and know nothing of those principles that govern the Almighty, and regulate the affairs of his kingdom; who spake, and worlds rolled into existence, and who upholds those worlds "by the word of his power." *It has evaded the grasp of the linguist, the philosopher and the sage; and the divine has had to exclaim as one of old, "great is the mystery of godliness."*¹³

W. W. Phelps perpetuated Joseph Smith's doctrines about God and the plurality of Gods in a *Times and Seasons* article in February 1845:

There is no subject, among men, that engrosses so much time and attention, and, at the same time, is so little understood, as *the being, knowledge, substance, attributes, and disposition of the living God*. In the first place, christians and believers in christianity, with a few exceptions, believe in one God; or perhaps we should say, in their own language, that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are one God. But to be obedient unto the truth, we will not thus transgress upon reason, sense and revelation.

It will then be necessary to treat the subject of the "Living God," in contradistinction to a dead God, or, one that has, "no body, parts, or passions," and perhaps, it may be well enough to say at the out set, that *Mormonism embraces a plurality of Gods*, as the apostle said, there were "Gods many and Lords many."¹⁴

HEAVENLY MOTHER

Joseph Smith introduced the concept in Nauvoo of a Heavenly Mother as a mate to a Heavenly Father, albeit only in private discussions. Such an idea had not been in Christianity, and yet the Prophet produced it. Subsequent presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have endorsed the existence of a Mother in Heaven. This idea has found many fond adherents through the decades of Mormonism, and in recent years of the twenty-first century, the concept of a Heavenly Mother has been more widely discussed.¹⁵ W. W. Phelps interjected this idea in a January 1845 poem, published in the *Times and Seasons*, that he entitled "Come to Me." This was the first known public declaration of this doctrine. "Come to me, here's the myst'ry that man hath not seen; / Here's our Father in heaven, and Mother, the Queen."¹⁶ Eliza R. Snow's poem now known as "O My Father," which became a beloved hymn, has more than anything else led Latter-day Saints to know there is a Heavenly Mother. However, it was not published until November 1845¹⁷ and may have even been influenced by Phelps's poem.

KINGDOM OF GOD

Closely connected to Joseph Smith's teachings about Deity and plurality of Gods and creations was his concept of the kingdom of God. Informed by revelations in ancient and modern scripture, Smith knew that Christ would rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords during the Millennium. He also taught that the Lord's prophet or prophets would lead this divine kingdom on earth in preparation for the Millennium.

In April 1842 Phelps ghostwrote for Joseph Smith an article entitled "The Government of God." The first paragraph of eleven in the essay reads as follows:

The government of the Almighty, has always been very dissimilar to the government of men; whether we refer to his religious government, or to the government of nations. *The government of God has always tended to promote peace, unity, harmony, strength and happiness*; while that of man has been productive of confusion, disorder, weakness and misery. The greatest acts of the mighty men have been to depopulate nations, and to overthrow kingdoms; and whilst they have exalted themselves and become glorious, it has been at the expense of the lives of the innocent—the blood

of the oppressed—the moans of the widow, and the tears of the orphan. Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Persia, Carthage, Rome—each were raised to dignity amid the clash of arms, and the din of war; and whilst their triumphant leaders led forth their victorious armies to glory and victory, their ears were saluted with the groans of the dying, and the misery and distress of the human family;—before them the earth was a paradise, and behind them a desolate wilderness; their kingdoms were founded in carnage and bloodshed, and sustained by oppression, tyranny, and despotism. *The designs of God, on the other hand, have been to promote the universal good, of the universal world;—to establish peace and good will among men;—to promote the principles of eternal truth;—to bring about a state of things that shall unite man to his fellow man—cause the world to “beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks”—make the nations of the earth dwell in peace; and to bring about the millen[n]ial glory—when “the earth shall yield its increase, resume its paradisaean glory, and become as the garden of the Lord.”*¹⁸

W. W. Phelps was among at least the ten most significant members of the political kingdom of God-oriented Council of Fifty when it was created in 1844. He wrote the council's tentative constitution that outlined a theodemocratic form of government, a constitution that was ultimately rejected. Phelps also penned the presidential platform for General Joseph Smith and again reiterated that God's will should be a major consideration in how America and its states should be governed.¹⁹

PROPHETIC ROLE AND REVELATION

Joseph Smith frequently testified that he was a prophet, although he acknowledged that he didn't act as such in all moments of his life. He stated time and again that God had revealed precious truths to him and that he struggled to pass all of them on to the Saints. W. W. Phelps completely bought into Joseph Smith's prophetic calling. He was certain that Smith was operating as a prophet like unto the prophets of old. With his extensive knowledge of scripture, Phelps was able to pass on to his fellow Mormons several testimonials from antiquity that connected Joseph Smith with ancient prophets. Phelps often contrasted Latter-day Saints' understanding of revelation with that of the sectarian world. In no other subject did Phelps expound as widely as about revelation and prophets.

True religion is of divine origin, it emanates from God: it teaches us what is his will—what our priviledges are, and what our duty is towards him, and to each other. It teaches us to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves. If we possess any knowledge of God, we must have received it from God. . . . Since religion is of divine origin, we can only obtain from God a true knowledge of his mind, his purposes, and designs; and what mode of worship will be acceptable to him. And if we have no means of coming to God ourselves we can receive no knowledge of God, but what is conveyed either by tradition, or writing; and since priestcraft has prevailed in different ages, and errors in translation and transposition are likely to ensue, it must follow as a natural consequence, that those who nearest the fountain, will be the most likely to partake of the purest streams.—And it must be obvious to every

*understanding mind, that all correct intelligence proceeds from God, and that the more frequent intercourse a man has with the Lord, the more communications he has from the Almighty, and the more frequent God's revelations are to him, the more he will know the purposes and designs of his Heavenly Father, and consequently of true religion.*²⁰

When Joseph Smith was nominal editor of the *Times and Seasons*, Phelps ghostwrote an article in behalf of the Prophet entitled “Knowledge Is Power.” Throughout the article, Phelps demonstrated his grasp of biblical history, both textual and contextual. Here is a small sample:

To go on, then, with our subject in its true course, will be to speak of that *knowledge that cometh from above—which surpasses understanding; even revelation, which unfolds the mysteries of eternity*. In this course, however, we are aware that the world will not acquiesce; for, notwithstanding, literally speaking, that *all knowledge comes from God, yet when it has been revealed, all men have not believed it as revelation at the time*. Hence, when Abel's offering was accepted of the Lord, *that knowledge must have been communicated by revelation, and that revelation though it gave Abel power with God: still Cain was offended, disbelieved and committed murder*. Cain knew the Lord, and believed in his father Adam's scripture, or revelation, but one revelation was enough: he could not bear new ones, and fell.

Noah was a perfect man, and *his knowledge or revelation of what was to take place upon the earth*, gave him power to prepare and save himself and family from the destruction of the flood. This knowledge, or revelation, like the preceeding one to Abel, was not believed by the inhabitants of the earth. They knew Adam was the first man, made in the image of God; that he was a good man: that Enoch walked with God three hundred and sixty-five years, and was translated to heaven without tasting death: but they could not endure the new revelation: the old we believe because our fathers did, but away with new revelations—and the flood swept them away.²¹

One of Joseph Smith's novel concepts was that the knowledge of God was conveyed in the days of Adam with a pure language and that this pure language would be again restored to faithful Saints in the future. With the aid of scribes, Joseph even prepared “a sample of pure language” in March 1832.²² “Smith worried over the limits of human language for his entire career, perhaps for most of his conscious life. Words notoriously deceived and obfuscated; foreign languages acted as barriers separating peoples. Words often failed Smith himself, who too frequently felt that he could not adequately express the revelations he experienced. . . . Smith saw the language beyond language spoken in Eden as the solution to such failings.”²³ W. W. Phelps, who often discussed this language of Eden with Joseph Smith, indicated that the Lord would “return to them [the faithful] a *pure language*, that they might call upon him with one consent.”²⁴ Both Smith and Phelps strongly believed that once the pure language was restored, revelations would come forth more abundantly.

PRIESTHOOD POWER

A necessary element to receiving heavenly revelation, as understood by Joseph Smith, was having the holy priesthood of God. Without the priesthood, the gospel and the church could not be restored. Revelations could not continue. In an essay on “the Melchizedec Priesthood,” W. W. Phelps explained the correlation: “In every age of the world where God has had a gospel church, *there has always been connected with that gospel a priesthood, whose duties and privilege it was to hold intercourse with heaven, receive instructions from the Lord, administer in the ordinances of the gospel, and govern the kingdom of God, or church of Jesus Christ.*”²⁵ He added:

It was through the power of the priesthood that the world was framed, “through faith; by the power of God.” Hence, the heavenly priesthood consulted together before this world rolled into existence, and said, “let us make man after our own image and likeness.” *They possess the power and the intelligence to do this thing, and knowledge is power, and the priesthood holds the keys of this power, both in heaven and on earth. It is the law by which all things are governed, and hence if we have correct principles unfolded unto us on the earth, we have also a pattern of heavenly things.*²⁶

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE AND ENDOWMENT

Joseph Smith’s signal objective in Nauvoo, in both temporal and spiritual senses, was to complete a new temple unto God wherein all worthy Saints could participate in ancient covenants and an increase of heavenly knowledge. This was an arduous undertaking, and, sadly, the temple was not completed until a year and a half after Smith was killed. That it would ever be completed at all is a wonder. The Prophet used his spokesman in the *Times and Seasons*, W. W. Phelps, to promote the need of completing this temple:

If there is any subject in which the saints of the Most High are interested more than another, it is in the completion of the edifice [the temple]. . . . [W]hen we consider the great work in which we are engaged, a work that has been looked forward to with delight by the ancient servants of God; a theme about which all the inspired poets have sung, and all the prophets, from the foundation of the world, have wrote—even the “dispensation of the fulness of times, which has been spoken of by ALL the prophets since the world began.” God has reserved us as the honored instruments to participate in the blessings glories, and privileges, that “prophets and kings desired to see, but died without the sight.”]

Under these circumstances, blessed with the light and intelligence of heaven, and with direct revelation from the Most High, *it behooves us as his people to use the most untiring diligence, and to exert all our energies in the accomplishment of an object so desirable for us to attend to; and so pregnant with importance to the inhabitants of this city. The Lord has given us directions in regard to this affair, and has said, “let the House be built by the tithing of my people.” This is a commandment which is binding, which is imperative upon all God’s people, and if we consider ourselves his people, we shall feel ourselves bound under the strongest obligations, even that*

of duty, to our God to fulfil this requisition. We take pleasure in stating that many of the saints have come forward with willingness and cheerfulness, and have tithed and consecrated all, yea more than could have been required of them; whilst others have relaxed in their duty and have been slow to perform their covenants.²⁷

When the Nauvoo Temple was finally completed and all worthy adults in and around Nauvoo had received their sacred ordinances, W. W. Phelps wrote the following in “Dedication Hymn”:

Ho, ho, for the Temple's completed,—
*The Lord hath a place for his head,
 And the priesthood, in power, now lightens
 The way of the living and the dead!*

See, see, mid the world's dreadful splendor
 Christianity, folly and sword,
*The Mormons, the diligent Mormons,
 Have rear'd up this house to the Lord!*

*By the spirit and wisdom 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 finish'd,
 Is counted—*one miracle done!*

Gaze, gaze, at the flight of the righteous,
 From the “fire shower of ruin” at hand,
 Their pray'rs, and their suff'rings, are waiting
 Jehovah to sweep off the land!

Sing, sing, for the hour of redemption,
 The day of the poor Saint's 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 fetch'd;—
 The wonderful chain of our union
 Is tighten'd the longer it's stretch'd!

Shout, shout, for the armies of heaven,
 Will purify earth at a word,
 And the “Twelve,” with the Saints that are faithful,
 “Enter into the joys of their Lord!”²⁸

MARRIAGE, WOMEN, AND FAMILIES

Joseph Smith reflected often about the importance of marriage, women, and united families—particularly those unions that through the power of the priesthood would last through “all eternity.” W. W. Phelps, having been converted to the eternal nature of families back in Kirtland, became engrossed with these subjects and wrote about them often in all church publications in which he played a part. These include the secular *The Wasp* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.

For *The Wasp* he penned articles that he entitled “Wives” (May 21, 1842), “The Sexes” (June 11, 1842), and “Woman” (July 2, 1842). For the *Nauvoo Neighbor* he wrote “A Whisper to the Husband” (September 6, 1843), “A Whisper to the Wife” (September 6, 1843), “Influence of Women” (November 15, 1843), and “Avoid Quarreling” (November 22, 1843). For the *Times and Seasons*, Phelps wrote a serial piece called “To Parents” over three issues (March 1–April 1, 1844) and a directive to “The Youth” (March 1845). Phelps was dogmatic in his views regarding the respective roles of men, women, and children, particularly pertaining to their places in a nuclear family. Clearly, he had clung to the firm feelings that he had expressed in his letters to Sally in 1835, as shown in chapter 15. Phelps firmly gave his view in a piece entitled “Wives”:

Wom[e]n should be acquainted that no beauty hath any charms but the inward one of the mind; and that a gracefulness in their manners is much more engaging than that of their person; that modesty and meekness are the true and lasting ornaments; for she that has these is qualified as she ought to be for the management of the family, for the education of the children, for an affection to her husband, and submitting in a prudent way of living. These only are the charms that render wives amiable and give them the best title to our respect.²⁹

Making life pleasant for her husband was another duty of the wife, according to Phelps:

Study your husband’s temper and character; and be it your pride and pleasure to conform to his wishes. Check at once the first advances to contradiction, even of the most trivial nature.— Beware of the first dispute. . . .

Let your husband be dearer and of more consequence to you than any other human being; and have no hesitation in confessing those feelings to him.

Endeavor to make your husband’s habitation alluring and delightful to him.

Let it be a sanctuary to which his heart may always turn from the ills and anxieties of life.³⁰

Phelps shared his advice to husbands as well. He desired that the man use kindness with his wife, but it was clear who was to be the head of the family:

The happiness of the wife is committed to the keeping of the husband; prize the sacred trust, and never give her cause to repent the confidence she has reposed in you. In contemplating her character, recollect the materials human nature is composed of, and do not expect perfection.

Do justice to her merits and *point out her faults*; for I do not ask you to treat her errors with indulgence, but then *endeavor to amend them with wisdom, gentleness and love*.

Do not jest about the bonds of a married state. Make it an established rule to consult your wife on all occasions. Your interest is hers; and undertake no plan contrary to her advice and approbation.³¹

W. W. Phelps also urged children and adolescents to obey their parents and cultivate appropriate habits of behavior and worship while they were young.

The most heavenly idea we have witnessed recently, is, the meeting of the children and youth, to worship God, and to practice holiness by a recitation of scripture, by singing and by prayer. Such a course is praise-worthy, and virtuous boys and girls, who thus improve their time and manners, will yet have the joy to say: *it was good for us that we followed after righteousness while young: we know how to behave in age, and save our souls from the "second death," and when we die we shall inherit eternal lives.*³²

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

As his prophetic ministry unfolded, Joseph Smith sought God's will regarding the fate of deceased persons who had not been baptized by authority in the flesh. In 1840 in Nauvoo, Smith introduced baptism for the dead as an extension of the doctrine.

One of Phelps's earliest editorials in behalf of Joseph Smith was entitled "Baptism for the Dead." In a verbose first paragraph, something that Joseph Smith himself according to his style would not write, Phelps as ghostwriter outlined the concept that God loves all his children and that it is by his laws that the outcome for each person will take place.

The great designs of God in relation to the salvation of the human family are very little understood by the professedly wise, and intelligent generation in which we live; various and conflicting are the opinions of men concerning the plan of salvation; the requisitions of the Almighty; the necessary preparations for heaven; the state and condition of departed spirits; and the happiness, or misery that is consequent upon the practice of righteousness and iniquity according to their several notions of virtue, and vice. The Mussulman [Muslim] condemns the Heathen, the Jew, and the Christian, and the whole world of mankind that reject his Koran as infidels, and consigns the whole of them to perdition. The Jew believes that the whole world that reject his faith, and are not circumcised, are gentile dogs, and will be damned. The Heathen are equally as tenacious about their principles, and the Christian consigns all to perdition who cannot bow to his creed and submit to his ipse dixit [a dogmatic and unproven statement]. *But while one portion of the human race are judging and condemning the other without mercy, the great parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care, and paternal regard; he views them as his offspring; and without any of these contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes "his sun to rise on the evil and the good; and sends his rain on the just and unjust."* He holds the reins of judgment in his hands; he is a wise lawgiver,

and will judge all men, not according to the narrow contracted notions of men, but “according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil” or whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, India: he will judge them “not according to what they have not, but according to what they have” *those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law; we need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the great Jehovah, he will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed.*³³

THE HOLY GHOST

W. W. Phelps wrote considerably about receiving the Holy Ghost with its attendant blessings. His arguments were largely against sectarians who had allowed unbiblical principles about baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost to creep into their dogmas. Phelps wrote that many sectarians believe that the Holy Ghost always connotes supernatural powers. However, the truth is much more orderly:

*We believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now, as much as it was in the apostles days;—we believe that it is necessary to make and to organize the priesthood; that no man can be called to fill any office in the ministry without it; we also believe in prophecy, in tongues, in visions, and in revelation, in gifts and in healings; and that these things cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost; we believe that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that holy men in these days speak by the same principle; we believe in its being a comforter and a witness bearer, “that it brings things past to our remembrance, leads us into all truth, and shews us of things to come”: we believe that “no man can know that Jesus is the Christ; but by the Holy Ghost.” We believe in it in all its fullness, and power, and greatness, and glory: but whilst we do this we believe in it rationally, reasonably, consistently, and scripturally, and not according to the wild vagaries, foolish, notions and traditions of men.*³⁴

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

In the same essay just cited, Phelps insisted that the exercise of all spiritual gifts is connected with the gift of the Holy Ghost. However, no recipient of this gift is always granted the privilege of exercising all spiritual gifts.

We believe that the Holy Ghost is imparted by the laying on of hands of those in authority, and that *the gift of tongues, and also the gift of prophecy, are gifts of the spirit, and are obtained through that medium;* but then to say that men always prophesied and spoke in tongues when they had the imposition of hands, would be to state that which is untrue, contrary to the practice of the apostles, and at variance with holy writ; for Paul says, “to one is given the gift of tongues, to another the gift of prophecy, and to another the gift of healing”—and again, “do all prophe[s]y? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?” evidently shewing that *all did not possess these several gifts;*

but that one received one gift and another received another gift—all did not prophe[s]y; all did not speak in tongues; all did not work miracles; but all did receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; sometimes they spake in tongues and prophesied in the Apostles' days, and sometimes they did not.

Joseph Smith ardently believed in the latter-day restoration of spiritual gifts. He learned early in his ministry that spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and manifestations of ecstatic spirituality could be misused and even duplicated by people under satanic influence. W. W. Phelps ghostwrote a significant article for Joseph Smith entitled "Try the Spirits." A sample paragraph from this piece as it originally appeared follows. Its characteristics (sentence and paragraph length, phrasing, diction) were common to Phelps and not to Joseph Smith. Phelps was also more familiar with mentioned historical peoples and events than Smith was.

"Try the spirits" but what by? are we to try them by the creeds of men? what preposterous folly, what sheer ignorance, what madness. Try the motions and actions of an eternal being, (for I contend that all spirits are such,) by a thing that was conceived in ignorance, and brought forth in folly.—a cobweb of yesterday. Angels would hide their faces, and devils would be ashamed and insulted and would say, "Paul we know, and Jesus we know, but who are ye." Let each man or society make a creed and try evil spirits by it and the devil would shake his sides, it is all that he would ask, all that he would desire. Yet many of them do this and hence "many spirits are abroad in the world." One great evil is that men are ignorant of the nature of spirits; their power, laws, government, intelligence &c., and imagine that when there is any thing like power, revelation, or vision manifested that it must be of God:—hence the Methodists, Presbyterians, and others frequently possess a spirit that will cause them to lay down, and during its operation animation is frequently entirely suspended; they consider it to be the power of God, and a glorious manifestation from God,—a manifestation of what?—is there any intelligence communicated? are the curtains of heaven withdrawn, or the purposes of God developed? have they seen and conversed with an angel; or have the glories of futurity burst upon their view? No! but their body has been inanimate, the operation of their spirit suspended, and all the intelligence that can be obtained from them when they arise, is a shout of glory, or hallelujah, or some incoherent expression; but they have had "the power." The Shaker will whirl around on his heel impelled by a supernatural agency, or spirit, and think that he is governed by the spirit of God: and the Jumper will jump, and enter into all kinds of extravagancies, a Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers, (or Friends) moved as they think by the spirit of God, will sit still and say nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does he recognize? surely such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Every one of these professes to be competent to try his neighbour's spirit, but no one can try his own, and what is the reason? because they have not a key to unlock, no rule wherewith to measure, and no criterion whereby they can test it; could any one tell the length, breadth, or height of a building with out a rule? test the quality of metals without a criterion, or point out the movements of the planetary system

without a knowledge of astronomy? certainly not: and if such ignorance as this is manifested about a spirit of this kind who can describe an angel of light, if Satan should appear as one in glory? Who can tell his color, his signs, his appearance, his glory? or what is the manner of his manifestation? Who can detect the spirit of the French Prophets, with their revelations, and visions, and power, and manifestations? or who can point out the spirit of the Irvingites with their apostles, and prophets, and visions, and tongues, and interpretations, &c. &c.; or who can drag into daylight and develop the hidden mysteries of the false spirits that so frequently are made manifest among the Latter-Day Saints? *We answer that no man can do this without the Priesthood, and having a knowledge of the laws by which spirits are governed; for as, "no man knows the things of God but by the spirit of God," so no man knows the spirit of the devil and his power and influence but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the Priesthood the mysterious operations of his devices: without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look, and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God:—together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb which is so characteristic of his proceedings, and his mysterious windings. A man must have the discerning of spirits, before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors: for nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit, when they think they have the spirit of God. Thousands have felt the influence of its terrible power, and baneful effects; long pilgrimages have been undertaken, penances endured, and pain, misery, and ruin have followed in their train; nations have been convulsed, kingdoms overthrown, provinces laid waste, and blood, carnage, and desolation are the habiliments in which it has been clothed. The Turks, the Hindoos, the Jews, the Christians, the Indians, in fact all nations have been deceived, imposed upon and injured through the mischievous effects of false spirits.*³⁵

Even though the foregoing is in Phelps's language, the doctrines that the lengthy essay espouses were inspired by revelations to and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

TRUTHFULNESS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Perhaps the hallmark of all divine revelations that came through the Prophet Joseph Smith was the Book of Mormon itself. W. W. Phelps was absolutely converted to the Book of Mormon—to its historicity as well as to its veracity in putting forth the "fulness of the gospel" of Jesus Christ. Once he became "printer unto the church," he promoted the Book of Mormon again and again as a book brought forth by prophets of God as was the Holy Bible.

In Nauvoo, Phelps reported contemporaneous archaeological discoveries in the Western Hemisphere that he contended supported the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.³⁶ Here is a sample of Phelps's observations about the signal discoveries of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood in Guatemala:

Mr. Stephens gives an account of ancient cities he has visited, where once dwelt the powerful, the wise, the scientific, and to use his own words; “architecture, sculpture and painting, all the arts which embellished life had flourished in this overgrown city; orators, warriors, and statesmen, beauty, ambition, and glory, had lived and passed away, and none knew that such things had been, or could tell of their past existence.” In the last clause, Mr. Catherwood is mistaken. *It has fallen to his lot to explore the ruins of this once mighty people, but the “Book of Mormon” unfolds their history; and published as it was, years before these discoveries were made, and giving as it does, accounts of a people, and of cities that bear a striking resemblance to those mentioned by Mr. Stephens, both in regard to magnificence and location, it affords the most indubitable testimony of the historical truth of that book, which has been treated so lightly by the literati and would be philosophers of the present age.*³⁷

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Both Joseph Smith and his doctrinal interpreter W. W. Phelps thought about, spoke on, and wrote about the “signs of the times” leading up to the second coming of Christ and the ushering in of the Millennium.³⁸ Phelps spiced the pages of the *Times and Seasons* with contemporary events that he interpreted to be signs of the times. Here is but one sample of his theological interpretation in this realm:

Our Lord in speaking of the signs of the last days, says that there shall be signs in the sun, earth distress of nations, with perplexity; men’s hearts failing them for fear of those things that are coming on the earth; and that there should be “earthquakes in divers places.”

We scarcely can take up a paper, in these days, but what there is recorded some account of an earthquake, tornado, singular comets, signs in the heavens, or some dreadful calamity, phenomenon, or circumstance, calculated to impress forcibly upon our minds the days in which we live.

Many of these signs can be explained on philosophical principle, and no doubt but all of them could, if we were only sufficiently acquainted with the philosophy of the heavens, as well as of the earth, if we could unravel the mysteries of the universe, and penetrate into the designs of God. *But this does not alter the principle that is taught by our Savior, as being a criterion whereby the saints are to judge of the signs of the times. If the earth is convulsed by a continuous succession of earthquakes, whose repeated throes are felt all over the universe . . . it is one [of] the signs of the last days; “there shall be earthquakes in divers places.”*³⁹

LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY

From the beginning of the Restoration, Joseph Smith taught members of the emerging church that they should live exemplary lives in order to be called “Saints.” W. W. Phelps often editorialized about behavioral traits that Mormons should demonstrate at all times.

It is the duty of the church of Christ, in Zion, to stand as an ensign to all nations, that the Lord hath set his hand the second time to restore the house of Israel to the lands of their inheritance, &c., and *it behooves the members of this church, to manifest before the world by a godly walk; by a noble example, as well as by sterling precept; by prudence in living; by plainness in dress; by industry; by economy; by faith and works, and above all, by solemnity, humility and patience, that this is a day of warning and not a day of many words.*

This being the order in Zion, how much more necessary is it, that the churches [branches] of Christ, which have not yet come up to this land, should show the world, *by well ordered conduct in all things, that they are the children of the living God? It is all-important and the salvation of many souls depends upon their faultless example.*⁴⁰

GLORY OF MORMONISM AND NAUVOO

Joseph Smith loved the city of Nauvoo. He provided the name *Nauvoo* from a Hebrew word that he interpreted to mean "The City Beautiful." W. W. Phelps also loved Nauvoo and frequently extolled its virtues. Through the press, he boasted of the city's strengths, even exaggerating at times to do so. Phelps equated the growth of Nauvoo with the growth of a Zion people preparing for the second coming of the Lord.

As good news from a far country, like pure water to a thirsty traveller, is very refreshing, so we have thought that a little space devoted to Nauvoo, might afford some consolation to those that wish well to the cause of Zion. It is one of the few comforts of the saints in this world, to be settled in peace, and witness the rap[i]d growth of their infant city, as a place of safety and gathering for the last days. For three or four miles upon the river and about the same distance back in the country, Nauvoo presents a city of gardens, ornamented with the dwellings of those who have made a covenant by sacrifice, and are guided by revelation, an exception to all other societies upon the earth. There is a beautiful commandment and call upon this subject in the fiftieth Psalm, as well as a prophecy of what the Lord will do when he shines, the perfection of beauty out of Zion. . . .

Such a statement of facts will be considered the simple truth, when it is remembered that *we are the only people upon the earth who profess to be governed and guided by direct revelation from the Lord:* And in this place let us not forget to mention that important commandment which said: "And again, inasmuch as there is land obtained, let there be workmen sent forth, of all kinds, unto this land, to labor for the saints of God." Now who that has witnessed the driving of the saints from place to place, and seen them in the short space of two or three years, raise a town or a city, glowing with all the arts, improvements, and curious workmen found any where upon the earth, can doubt this revelation? . . .

Two steam mills have been put into operation this season, and many other buildings for mechanical labor in the various branches of manufacture, are either under way or in contemplation,—*while the Temple of God, a work of great magnitude, and the Nauvoo House, which when finished will hardly be surpassed in the western world, are rising up as monuments of the enterprise, industry and reverence of the commandments of God, of the saints in their banishment from Missouri. . . .*

We have two presses doing as much as can be expected from the limited resources of a people twice plucked up by the roots, and plundered, even to their clothes, besides the loss of a good printing establishment. As far as truth can be spread and lies contradicted by two presses, against several thousand, it is done! and we have the gratification of saying that things seem to work together for good to them that look for the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴¹

Phelps also wrote about his beloved Nauvoo in poetry. In “God Save Nauvoo,” he also added some theological concepts.

When you pray for all blessings to equally flow;
 For the gathering and kingdom of Christ here below;
 For the good of all people: the Mormon and Jew,
 For a more perfect union: then pray without ceasing, O God save Nauvoo!
 When you pray for old Israel, now scattered afar:
 For the nations and kingdoms, degraded by war;
 For the world in its blindness, through wickedness, too;
 For redemption as promised; then pray without doubting, O God save Nauvoo
 When you pray for your foes, both without and within;
 For the captives in prison, the exiles in sin,
 When you enter your closet, as Christ told you to;
 And ask of the Father: then pray in the spirit, O God bless Nauvoo!⁴²

W. W. Phelps committed his life in Nauvoo to building up Joseph Smith as a prophet of God and as a candidate for president of the United States. He definitely had a forum to do this in the three newspapers published at the printing office. Among everything else, Phelps should be remembered for his tireless promoting of his hero, the Prophet.

NOTES

1. See chapter 17 for a full discussion of Phelps’s immense contributions in this area.
2. Arguably, Parley P. Pratt became a greater theologian than W. W. Phelps, but that distinction would come later with the cumulative effect of Pratt’s considerable contributions. Voluminous pamphleteering, writings in New York’s *The Prophet* and England’s *Millennial Star*, impressive autobiography, composing of beloved restoration hymns, trusted role as an apostle—with these achievements Parley Pratt appears in Mormon history as the most influential doctrinal interpreter next to the Prophet Joseph Smith. As such he may even rival the apostle Paul, who promulgated early Christianity far and wide. See Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Pratt and Phelps were friends and often immediate colleagues. The older Phelps no doubt had an influence on the younger Parley. Both ended up being great poets and had similar writing styles. Phelps wrote more directly in *Nauvoo* on doctrine than Pratt did, although Pratt assuredly had a massive impact on British converts, including those who made their way to Nauvoo. This emphasis on Phelps’s doctrinal contributions is not meant to imply that others did not add to the corpus of Mormon doctrine during this period.
3. In chapter 24 I outline my evidence that Phelps is the author of these multiple articles in the Nauvoo press. I take responsibility for my assertions.

4. *JSP*, J3:147, 153, 159, 184, 201, 222, 231n1036; Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 1–18; *MHC*, vol. F-1, 300–301; *HC*, 7:237–38.
5. This chapter does not analyze the theological thought of Joseph Smith working in harmony with W. W. Phelps. Samuel M. Brown recognized the significant Smith/Phelps collaboration and has written numerous essays and a book analyzing these significant doctrines and their impact on Mormonism. See the following, all written by Brown: "The Translator and the Ghostwriter: Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 26–62; "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden," *Church History* 78, no. 1 (March 2009): 26–65; "William Phelps's 'Paracletes': An Early Witness to Joseph Smith's Divine Anthropology," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 62–81; "The Early Mormon Chain of Belonging," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 1–52; "Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 3–52; "The Language of Heaven: Prolegomenon to the Study of Smithian Translation," *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 51–71; *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
6. "Vade Mecum," *T&S* 4 (February 1, 1843): 81–82; emphasis added.
7. The entire poem is in "The Answer," *T&S* 4 (February 1, 1843): 82–85; emphasis added. The *New York Herald*, published by the illustrious James Gordon Bennett, claimed to have the highest circulation of newspapers in the United States. Bennett published this poem under the title of "The Vision of Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the Latter Day Saints," *New York Herald*, March 1843, 2. The official history of the church took note of this, stating that it was "an unusual act of liberality towards the Saints, for a publisher." See *MHC*, vol. D-1, 1497; *HC*, 5:302. Likely Editor Bennett did this at the persuasion of his fellow newspaperman, W. W. Phelps, who had published some of Bennett's columns in the *Times and Seasons*.
8. Brown, "Translator and the Ghostwriter," 41, 41n55.
9. Joseph's Speckled Bird (W. W. Phelps), "Paracletes," *T&S* 6 (May 1, 1845): 891; emphasis added.
10. *MHC*, vol. E-1, 1961, 1963; *HC*, 6:303, 305. W. W. Phelps published a version of the King Follett discourse in *The Voice of Truth* (pp. 59–64), a pamphlet he published in July 1844.
11. The entirety of this address, sometimes referred to as the "Sermon in the Grove," is found in *HC*, 6:473–79, and *TPJS*, 369–76.
12. "Sons of God," *T&S* 4 (January 16, 1843): 74; emphasis added.
13. "Mystery of Godliness," *T&S* 4 (September 1, 1843): 312; emphasis added.
14. "The Living God," *T&S* 6 (February 15, 1845): 808; emphasis added.
15. "Mother in Heaven," one of the Gospel Topics essays found on lds.org: <https://www.lds.org/topics/mother-in-heaven>.
16. W. W. Phelps, "Come to Me," *T&S* 6 (January 15, 1845): 783.
17. Eliza R. Snow, "My Father in Heaven," *T&S* 6 (November 15, 1845): 1039. See also "O My Father," *Hymns*, no. 292; Jill Mulvay Derr, "The Significance of 'O My Father' in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow," *BYU Studies* 36, no. 1 (1996–97): 84–126.
18. "The Government of God," *T&S* 3 (July 15, 1842): 855–56; emphasis added. Most of this essay is in *TPJS*, 248–54.
19. This is Phelps's last phrase in Joseph Smith's platform: "[C]ome all the world—let us be brethren: let us be one great family; and let there be universal peace. Abolish the cruel customs of prisons, (except certain cases,) penitentiaries, and court-martials for desertion: and let reason and friendship reign over the ruins of ignorance and barbarity; yea I would, as the universal friend of man, open the prisons; open the eyes; open the ears and open the hearts of all people, to behold and enjoy freedom, unadulterated freedom: and God, who once cleansed the violence of the earth with a flood; whose son laid down his life for the salvation of all the father gave

- him out of the world; and who has promised that he will come and purify the world again with fire in the last days, should be supplicated by me for the good of all people.” “Gen. Smith’s Views on the Government and Policy of the U.S.,” *T&S* 5 (May 15, 1844): 533; emphasis added.
20. “The Religion of the Ancients,” *T&S* 4 (March 15, 1843): 135–36; emphasis added.
 21. “Knowledge Is Power,” *T&S* 3 (August 15, 1842): 889–90; emphasis added.
 22. *JSP*, MRB:264–65.
 23. Samuel Morris Brown, “The Language of Heaven: Prolegomenon to the Study of Smithian Translation,” *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 51–71. The quotation comes from pp. 54–55. Brent Lee Metcalfe discusses the same subject in his “Newly Discovered Copies of JS’s Adamic Q&A,” found online at <http://www.mormonstudiespodcast.com/newly-discovered-copies-of-jss-adamic-qa/>. Both Brown and Metcalfe bring W. W. Phelps into the picture as a collaborator with Joseph Smith in seeking after this “pure language of Eden.”
 24. “To the Editor of the Times and Seasons,” *T&S* 3 (September 1, 1842): 907; emphasis added.
 25. “The Melchizedec Priesthood,” *T&S* 4 (November 15, 1842): 10; emphasis added.
 26. “The Melchizedec Priesthood,” *T&S* 4 (December 1, 1842): 24.
 27. “The Temple,” *T&S* 3 (October 1, 1842): 937–39; italic emphasis added.
 28. W. W. Phelps, “Dedication Hymn,” *T&S* 6 (February 15, 1846): 1135; emphasis added.
 29. “Wives,” *The Wasp* 1 (May 21, 1842): 1; emphasis added.
 30. “A Whisper to the Wife,” *NN* 1 (September 6, 1843): 1; emphasis added.
 31. “A Whisper to the Husband,” *NN* 1 (September 6, 1843): 1; emphasis added.
 32. “The Youth,” *T&S* 6 (March 1, 1845): 830.
 33. ED [Joseph Smith, but ghostwritten by W. W. Phelps], “Baptism for the Dead,” *T&S* 3 (April 15, 1842): 759, 761; emphasis added. Most of this essay is also in *TPJS*, 217–23.
 34. ED [Joseph Smith, ghostwritten by W. W. Phelps], “The Gift of the Holy Ghost,” *T&S* 3 (June 15, 1842): 823; emphasis added. See also *TPJS*, 242–48.
 35. “Try the Spirits,” *T&S* 3 (April 1, 1842): 742–43; emphasis added. Also in *TPJS*, 202–15. “Try the Spirits” likely was a combined effort of W. W. Phelps, Benjamin Winchester, and John Taylor. Jonathan Neville dedicated a chapter to the authorship of “Try the Spirits” in his *Brought to Light*, 2nd ed. (n.p.: Digital Legend, 2016), 41–81. I contend that the portion quoted here came from Phelps. Since most of “Try the Spirits” appears in *TPJS*, it has become a well-known and highly used article in Mormon theology.
 36. See ED [Joseph Smith, ghostwritten by W. W. Phelps], “A Catacomb of Mummies Found in Kentucky,” *T&S* 3 (May 2, 1842): 781–82 (also in *TPJS*, 232–33); “Traits of Mosaic History, Found among the Azteca Nations,” *T&S* 3 (June 14, 1842): 818–20; “American Antiquities,” *T&S* 3 (July 15, 1842): 858–60; “Extract: From Stephens’ ‘Incidents of Travel in Central America,’” *T&S* 3 (September 15, 1842): 911–15; “Facts Are Stubborn Things,” *T&S* 3 (September 15, 1842): 921–22; “Zarahemla,” *T&S* 3 (October 1, 1842): 927–28; “Stephens’ Work on Central America,” *T&S* 4 (October 1, 1843): 346–47; “Ancient Ruins,” *T&S* 5 (December 15, 1844): 744–48; “Stephens’ Works on Central America,” *NN* 1 (November 22, 1843): 2.
 37. ED, “Stephens’ Work on Central America,” 346; emphasis added.
 38. For a most interesting and fanciful rendition of what circumstances the Saints might find themselves in during the Millennium, as perceived by Phelps, see “One Hundred Years Hence, 1945,” *NN* 3 (September 10, 1845): 2–3.
 39. “Signs of the Times,” *T&S* 4 (April 1, 1843): 153; emphasis added.
 40. “To the Church of Christ Abroad in the Earth,” *T&S* 5 (September 2, 1844): 628; emphasis added.