

## Chapter 8

# THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR

*W*. W. Phelps was now in his element—a fully equipped printing office. He could write to his heart’s content, even as he oversaw the printing of an influential newspaper. He was charged to print the word of the Lord as revealed to a living prophet. He considered his responsibility a high honor as he passionately threw himself into the work.

### PRINTING BEGINS

Now that they had a paper supply, the printers at W. W. Phelps & Co. went immediately to work preparing the first issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which they dated June 1832. The employees were W. W. Phelps, editor; Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, assistant editors; and two printing assistants, James Owens (who lived with his family one lot north of the Phelpses) and William Holbert. Ultimately, this establishment employed a total of seven persons.<sup>1</sup>

The brethren also began work on a small weekly newspaper dedicated to secular and business news for circulation among the general population of Jackson County. In the *Star*, as they often called their primary newspaper, the editors wrote, “We [also] publish a weekly paper, entitled ‘The Upper Missouri Advertiser,’ It will contain sketches of the news of the day, politics, advertisements, and whatever tends to promote the interest of the Great West.”<sup>2</sup> To contrast the two newspapers, they wrote in the October *Star* that this paper would “present [readers] with very little foreign news,” which instead would appear in the *Advertiser*. The *Star* would “contain more matter for the edification and benefit of the soul, to obtain a glorious resurrection; the gathering of Israel, and whomsoever wishes for godliness, than any thing else.”<sup>3</sup>



These were the first two newspapers printed in western Missouri. Additionally, these Mormon printers also advertised to do print jobs of all kinds. A common item was property deeds. W. W. Phelps & Co. was a complete printshop in every sense.

The Mormons' first publication in 1830 had been the Book of Mormon, published by Egbert B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York. That had been a costly undertaking. Now the church had its own publishing capability. The men working at W. W. Phelps & Co., along with their leader Joseph Smith, believed that their printing and publishing endeavors would no longer cost the church and its members so much money, but rather that the Literary Firm would ultimately bring in profits that would be used righteously in the law of consecration and stewardship.

So significant was this press to the cause of Zion that the leading brethren convened a solemn conference on May 29, 1832, at the printing office. John Whitmer read from Joseph's numerous "commandments," or revelations, pertaining to the press and the printing of the revelations. Back in Ohio, Whitmer had transcribed the majority of these revelations.<sup>4</sup> According to the minutes, W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery also spoke "in relation to rules & regulations of the office & the important duties devolving upon those whom the Lord has designated to spread his truths & revelations in these last days to the inhabitants of the earth." Clearly, these brethren were thinking big about their revealed projects. The culmination of this conference was the prayer offered by Bishop Edward Partridge wherein he "dedicate[d] the building for Printing & all materials appertaining thereto unto the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

The appearance of the first issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star* brought joy to the small band of Saints in Zion.<sup>6</sup> At long last they could take pride in their own periodical. It was eight pages long and filled with considerable information. Most men, and occasionally some women and children, needed numerous sittings in the candlelit evenings to digest the whole of it.

## REVELATIONS AND MILLENNIAL FERVOR

The first June issue contained two complete, important revelations to Joseph Smith (now D&C 20 and 22) and extracts from four others (D&C 45, 58, 72, and 133). It also contained the prophecy of Book of Mormon prophet Nephi, now found in 1 Nephi 13, regarding the value of both the Bible and the Book of Mormon to the world in the latter days, as well as the prophet Mormon's warning to the Gentiles found in 3 Nephi 30. This became a pattern for the *Star*: various revelations to Joseph Smith and extracts from the Book of Mormon would appear every month.

Phelps and his brethren included quotations, some lengthy and others pithy, from books and newspapers they had access to. Phelps had a few books in his possession, and current newspaper articles were drawn from exchange papers received through the US Postal Service. Tidbits of news from America and Europe, and less frequently from Asia and Latin America, were printed. This followed precisely the traditions of American newspapers of that era. In the first issue, for example, Phelps included a piece by a Mr. Robert Cathcart reporting alarming murder statistics, "a very large proportion [of which] was

occasioned by the immoderate use of ardent spirits."<sup>7</sup> Printing this article and others like it throughout the run of the *Star* demonstrated pro-temperance attitudes that Phelps and most other Mormons espoused.

Phelps gave his newspaper its intensely millennial fervor. He explained in the first issue that "with the help of God" he was including news items so that readers could be persuaded "to turn to God and live, before the great and terrible day of the Lord sweeps the earth of its wickedness." He exclaimed that the *Star* "comes not only as the messenger of truth, to bring the Revelations and Commandments of God which have been, but to publish those that God gives now, as in days of old, for he is the same God yesterday, to-day and forever."<sup>8</sup>

A historian concluded that "the *Star* gave voice to the belief that the Latter-day Saints were selected by God to bring the fullness of the gospel to the world at the end of time. They were a special people with unique responsibilities. They had been singled out as witnesses to 'the great doings of the Lord in these last days,' as agents to assist in 'bringing forth his everlasting covenant for the gathering of the elect.'"<sup>9</sup>

*The Evening and the Morning Star* provided many statistics that Phelps also probably intended to print in the proposed almanac. For example, the first issue reported the following:

The *Star*-office is situated within 12 miles of the west line of the state of Missouri:—which at present, is the western limits of the United States, and about 120 miles west of any press in the state—In about 39 degrees of North Latitude, and about 17 1/2 degrees of West Longitude; 2 1/2 miles south of Missouri River; 280 miles by land, or 500 by water west of St. Louis; nearly 1200 west of Washington; 1300 from New-York, and more than 1500 from Boston.<sup>10</sup>

Phelps often provided "news items," but usually with his millenarian commentary:

The frontier Indian war continues. There have been several killed on both sides. The government of the United States has appropriated \$300,000 for this purpose, and we may calculate, the war will be prosecuted vigorously as far as necessary.

The Cholera Morbus commenced its deadly work at Quebec, Lower Canada about the first of June. It is said to be severer, than in Europe. The will of God must be done whether by pestilence, famine, or the sword.<sup>11</sup>

## SPIRITUAL ADVISER TO ZION

Phelps hoped that his newspaper would help promote literacy and learning in Zion. He asserted that "man was created to dress the earth, and to cultivate his mind, and glorify God. . . . For, when a disciple, educated, even as Paul at the feet of Gamaliel, is guided by the Holy Spirit, he not only edifies his fellow beings correctly, but he improves his faculties agreeable to the will of God."<sup>12</sup>

Phelps used the *Star* to help fulfill his assignment as spiritual adviser to the Saints in Zion. Evidence shows that Phelps did the actual writing for all or nearly all of the

# THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. I.

Independence, Mo. June, 1832.

No. 1.

## Revelations.

### THE ARTICLES AND COVENANTS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“editorials.” They regularly included suggestions on how the members should comport themselves. For example, Phelps admonished:

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.

. . . The salvation of many souls, depends upon their faultless example. They will, therefore, knowing that the Lord will suddenly come to his temple, do their part in preparing the way, by observing the Sabbath-day and keep it holy; by teaching their children the gospel, and learning them to pray; by avoiding extremes in all matters; by shunning every appearance of evil; by studying to be approved, and doing unto others, as they would have others do unto them; by bearing trouble and persecution patiently.<sup>13</sup>

Phelps also spoke to the need for educating the children of Zion:

Those appointed to select and prepare books for the use of schools [W. W. Phelps and John Corry], will attend to that subject, as soon as more weighty matters are finished. But the parents and guardians, in the Church of Christ need not wait—it is all important that children, to become good should be taught so. . . . Yes, they are they that must follow us, and perform the duties which, not only appertain to this world, but to the second coming of the Savior, even preparing for the Sabbath of creation, and for eternity.<sup>14</sup>

No doubt William and Sally Phelps strove daily to read the holy scriptures in their household, to sing hymns with their children, and to train them in the principles of their beloved restored gospel.

Most of all, as it pertained to his journalism work, Phelps desired to teach and interpret newly revealed Mormon doctrine to the readers of *The Evening and the Morning Star*. He wrote that this newspaper “comes to bring good tidings of great joy to all people, but more especially the house of Israel scattered abroad, that the day of their redemption is near, for the Lord hath set his hand again the second time to restore them to the lands of their inheritance; ready to receive the Savior in the clouds of Heaven.”<sup>15</sup>

## HYMNS OF ZION

Evidencing that he took seriously Joseph Smith’s charge to him to prepare hymns for the Saints, Phelps included six hymns on the last page of the *Star’s* first issue. Three were compositions from Protestant hymn writers that Emma Smith had selected and sent with her husband to Zion to be included in a Mormon hymnbook. Two others were written by Phelps himself. One, “Redeemer of Israel,” was adapted by Phelps from a poem by Joseph Swain. Two stanzas of this adapted hymn illustrate Phelps’s comprehension of the purposes of Zion as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. They also show the ongoing

contribution of Phelps to the cause of Zion throughout the history of the Latter-day Saint movement.

We know he is coming  
 To gather his sheep,  
 And plant them in Zion, in love,  
 For why in the valley  
 Of death should they weep,  
 Or alone in the wilderness rove?

.....

As children of Zion  
 Good tidings for us:  
 The tokens already appear;  
 Fear not and be just,  
 For the Kingdom is ours,  
 And the hour of Redemption is near.<sup>16</sup>

In the next several issues of the *Star*, Phelps printed numerous hymns selected by Emma Smith. In March 1833 he began featuring hymns of his own composition as well, such as “Home” (“Now Let Us Rejoice”),<sup>17</sup> “Age After Age Has Roll’d Away,”<sup>18</sup> “My Soul Is Full of Peace and Love,”<sup>19</sup> and “The Great and Glorious Gospel Light.”<sup>20</sup> He planned to put them into a new hymnbook in a few months.

## CHURCH GROWTH IN ZION

Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer sent multiple copies of *The Evening and the Morning Star* to Ohio for distribution among members there and for missionaries to take with them to other points in the East. Joseph Smith was pleased with the arrival of the Latter-day Saints’ first newspaper. This was truly a concrete sign that the restoration of the gospel was gaining momentum. “In July, we received the first number of *The Evening and Morning Star* [*sic*], which was a joyous treat to the Saints,” the official history recorded. “Delightful, indeed, was it to contemplate that the little band of brethren had become so large, and grown so strong, in so short a time as to be able to issue a paper of their own, which contained not only some of the revelations, but other information also,—which would gratify and enlighten the humble inquirer after truth.”<sup>21</sup> The historians who would later compile this portion of the church’s official historical record in 1842–44 in Nauvoo, primarily Willard Richards and Phelps, inserted numerous extracts from the *Star*.

Meanwhile, as spring progressed and summer arrived, the Saints in Zion planted their crops and made ready for a steady influx of new members to Jackson County. In the July issue of the *Star*, Phelps wrote words of instruction to all Saints in the eastern United States pertaining to the gathering to Zion. “Notwithstanding the work of the gathering will be accomplished, we believe, in a speedy manner,” he wrote, “yet the Lord has commanded that it shall not be done in haste, nor by flight, but that all things shall be prepared

before you." Zion's leaders were ready to accept some new immigrants, but not too many, in 1832. Thus, Phelps recommended that "if a church [a branch] is desirous to come to the land of Zion, we would recommend, that first, by letter or otherwise, they make known their desires and their situation to the Bishop in Ohio [Newel K. Whitney], or in the land of Zion [Edward Partridge], and receive information from them before they start." Phelps stated that if large groups from different parts of the states and ultimately from different nations all came together at once in Zion, this would lead to "a state of confusion."<sup>22</sup>

This admonition for slowness and care had an effect because the number of Saints in Zion doubled from only about four hundred to about eight hundred during 1832. Without the restraints, the number could have been much higher and the attendant concerns for land and food horrendous. In the *Star's* November issue, Phelps reported, "Since the gathering commenced, which is a little over a year, the number of the disciples which have come from the east, and which have been baptized in this region, is 465." He added that an additional number of 345 were children or nonmembers among the Saints, making a total of 810. He reported that twelve had died "since the emigration commenced to this land" and that six marriages had been "solemnized."<sup>23</sup>

Throughout this busy summer the printing team also placed the type for the Book of Commandments. This was, of course, the printers' most important product. By December this compilation of revelations was in the press. But because the team didn't have the appropriate paper on which to print the volume nor all the tools to bind the book, the publication of the Book of Commandments was delayed till the next summer.<sup>24</sup> In May 1833, the brethren lamented the delay of its completion: "[It] will be published in the course of the present year, at from 25, to 50 cents a copy. We regret that in consequence of circumstances not within our control, this book will not be offered to our brethren as soon as was anticipated. We beg their forbearance, and solicit an interest in their prayers, promising to use our exertions with all our means to accomplish the work."<sup>25</sup>

All along, W. W. Phelps kept his readers aware of the significance of the holy work in which they were engaged and their prospects for eternal life if they, as a body of Saints, proved worthy. Clearly, he was thrilled with the revelations that came from Joseph Smith to God's people and excited about the chance he had to disseminate them through the paper. In July 1832, in his "Items for the Public" column that contained small newsworthy statements, he noted, "The 'Vision,' [now D&C 76] which appears on the second page [of the July issue], is the greatest news that was ever published to man. It shows the economy of God, in preparing mansions for men: Blessed be the name of the Lord."<sup>26</sup>

Phelps, it appears, also enjoyed writing for writing's sake. In the September issue he wrote an article titled "Writing Letters." "The Art of writing is one of the greatest blessings we enjoy," he exclaimed. "To cultivate it is our duty, and to use it is our privilege." In addition to encouraging church members to write about daily affairs, which Phelps felt was a wonderful thing to do, he suggested to them that they record their feelings about the truth that had come to them in such rich abundance. "Begin to think right and your thoughts may be worth saving," he suggested. "Husbands! live for Jesus, for he lives for you: Wives! live for Jesus, for he lives for you: Children! live for Jesus, for he lives for you:



And whatever you write, let it be—the truth: . . . and then, when letters are written by you, from Zion to the world, the spirit of the Lord will bear record, that they are true.”<sup>27</sup>

Phelps was also a sentimental man when it came to nature’s wonders. He was always an advocate of recognizing God’s hand in all the beauties of the earth. In the *Star* he included his sentiments about “Twilight.” He felt that dusk was a time to praise God with one’s family by singing “Evening Hymns,” a few of which he either wrote or gathered for the church’s first hymnal. Twilight was a sacred time to him: “There is something in this hour, so tender so truly fraught with simple, yet sublime associations that it belongs rather to heaven than to earth.” He felt that the day had many mundane distractions, but twilight could bring forth a “fountain of fancy” in which a person could revel in “sweet but solemn recollections.”<sup>28</sup>

Phelps also loved all the changing seasons. In the fall of 1832 he wrote the following for his readers:

Autumn comes. The spring with her flowers; the summer with her heat and thunder, is past; and autumn—sear, fruitful autumn, appears at last.—Well so it is—and so it has been—and so it will be, while the seasons come and go over our earth. Autumn is pleasant; autumn is sweet. True, in it there is a shade—a more sober aspect thrown around us. But it is as the soft twilight of eve, closing over the theatre of mirth, of bustle and confusion. Like the youth, who has been, by the flight of time, brought to the sedateness of manhood—so is autumn. . . . And again, the rich banquet which is spread over the earth, inspire us with a noble gratitude to its Giver and Benefactor.<sup>29</sup>

Phelps’s publishing of Joseph Smith’s revelations and his own explanations of doctrine proved to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the Saints in Jackson County, in Ohio, and in scattered branches in the United States and Canada could learn more about precious truths revealed in the “last days.” However, on the other, the original settlers in Jackson and surrounding counties in Missouri could also read these same lines, and many did. Their feelings of distress about Mormon beliefs and aspirations frightened them and later provoked them to vigilante action against the Saints.<sup>30</sup>

The ever-growing church in Zion required the leaders to take steps to more efficiently oversee the flock. They held a series of conferences in the summer, fall, and early winter to make further decisions. The first conference, held on Tuesday, July 3, 1832, resolved that these men would conduct spiritual affairs according to a revelation (D&C 68) received by Joseph Smith the previous November in Hiram, Ohio.<sup>31</sup> This revelation had chastised the inhabitants of Zion for having “idlers among them.” Thus it charged them “to labor, in all faithfulness; for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord.” Zion’s members were also reminded “to observe the Sabbath” and to teach their children principles of the gospel, to prepare them for baptism at age eight, and to help them avoid growing up in wickedness.<sup>32</sup>

The second conference, which was held ten days later in Kaw, divided the church in Zion into “branches.” This is one of the first occasions in the Restoration to use the term *branch* instead of *church*. The word *branch* was used for geographical units of members

presided over by a branch president. On July 13 the existing one branch in Kaw and the adjoining Blue Township was divided into three branches.<sup>33</sup>

At the last of the conferences, on December 3, 1832, the council of all high priests in Zion, including Phelps, resolved that high priests and elders would have separate meetings for spiritual instruction. This council determined that seven high priests—W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Edward Partridge, Isaac Morley, John Corrill, and Sidney Gilbert (the seven men who all along had given the greatest leadership to the church in Zion)—would compose a committee to supervise all the branches in Jackson County as well as determine when and which missionaries would be sent from Zion to the world.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps the knottiest of all administrative problems in 1832 for these presiding high priests in Zion was regulating the immigration to their lands and the subsequent bestowing of stewardships on the arriving men and their families. From time to time, Phelps or others of the leading brethren would write to Ohio. They desired further instructions and advice from the Prophet and other brethren there. In one of these letters, dated June 30,<sup>35</sup> Phelps had inquired about individuals choosing to come to Zion on their own without first obtaining permission and a certificate of their stewardship, or recommend, from the bishop in Ohio (Newel K. Whitney), as a revelation (D&C 72)<sup>36</sup> had directed. In a July 31 letter to Phelps, Joseph Smith gave these members a severe reprimand for “making a mock[ery] of the profession of faith in the commandments by proceeding contrary thereto in not . . . obtaining recommends.” Throughout his lengthy letter, the Prophet demonstrated how seriously he felt it was to “discharge” his “duty” pertaining to building up Zion and living the “law of the Church” (D&C 42, section heading) according to the will of the Lord.<sup>37</sup>

## RIVALRY BETWEEN OHIO AND MISSOURI

In Joseph Smith’s aforementioned letter of July 31, 1832, to Phelps, Joseph expressed considerable dismay about the supposed attitude of some of the Missouri church leaders. Clearly, issues regarding the appropriate use of authority and the rivalry between the Ohio and Missouri leaders still festered. In response to Phelps’s June 30 letter, Joseph Smith told Phelps that he was greatly disturbed with the “cold and indifferent manner” in which Phelps had written the letter. Joseph even wondered if “that fellowship and brotherly love which you professed when we left you” even still existed. The Prophet also referred to a much more biting letter he had received in June from John Corrill, a counselor in the Missouri bishopric. This letter, no longer extant, allegedly “raked up every fault” of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Newel K. Whitney. Joseph’s feelings were deeply hurt by Corrill’s accusations that were “absolutely false” and arose obviously “from the father of all lies [Satan].” In response, the Prophet reminded the Missouri leadership through this missive to Phelps that he had nothing but love and concern for Zion and its inhabitants and would never do anything to destroy it. Joseph also pointed out that Sidney Rigdon had become “frantick” (probably meaning “deeply depressed” in today’s language) over

the difficulties with his Zion brethren.<sup>38</sup> Phelps pondered seriously and remorsefully for weeks upon the contents of Joseph Smith's letter.

The problem of not following all the rules of the law of the church persisted regarding the immigrant question. Again, Phelps wrote to Joseph Smith asking for clarification. As earlier, the Prophet sent a reply to his trusted and beloved associate, this time a much longer and detailed letter. The instructions, written on November 27, 1832, from Kirtland, were so important to the cause of Zion that portions of the letter have been incorporated into the Doctrine and Covenants (section 85).<sup>39</sup> Joseph Smith indicated that the "still small voice" whispered to him these principles: (1) the church historian (John Whitmer) should keep a record of events and people in Zion, especially of those individuals who consecrated properties and received inheritances "legally from the bishop"; (2) the historian should keep a record of the righteous deeds of the righteous and the apostate deeds of those apostatizing; (3) those who do not follow the law of consecration properly would be cut off from the church; (4) one who has authority, like Bishop Partridge, should not "[put] forth his hand to steady the ark of God," and if he did he would be replaced by "one mighty and strong"; and (5) those who are cut off from the church, especially members of the high priesthood, will lose their "inheritance among the saints of the Most High."<sup>40</sup> As the editors of *The Joseph Smith Papers* expressed, "Record keeping was of great concern to JS at this time."<sup>41</sup> After receiving this letter, Phelps published a portion of it in the January 1833 issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star*.<sup>42</sup>

Phelps had reason to rejoice over this letter: Joseph Smith expressed many words of personal comfort and support to him. Phelps would treasure them often. Following are the excerpts of Joseph's letter directed personally to Phelps:

I say brother, because I feel so from the heart.

I am well, and my family also; God grant that you may enjoy the same, and yours, and all the brethren and sisters who remember to inquire after the commandments of the Lord, and the welfare of Zion and such a being as myself.

Brother William, in the love of God, having the most implicit confidence in you as a man of God, having obtained this confidence by a vision of heaven, therefore I will proceed to unfold to you some of the feelings of my heart.

You, who do the will of the Lord and keep His commandments, have need to rejoice with unspeakable joy, for such shall be exalted very high, and shall be lifted up in triumph above all the kingdoms of this world.

Oh, Lord, when will the time come when Brother William, Thy servant, and myself, shall behold the day that we may stand together and gaze upon eternal wisdom engraven upon the heavens, while the majesty of our God holdeth up the dark curtain until we may read the round of eternity, to the fulness and satisfaction of our immortal souls? Oh, Lord deliver us in due time from the little, narrow prison, almost as it were, total darkness of paper, pen and ink;—and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.<sup>43</sup>

The month of December 1832 came in relative peace and happiness for the little flock in Zion. They still believed strongly in their divine destiny. One of those who had gathered to Zion that season, William E. McLellin, exultantly wrote his relatives after arriving

in Independence: “[Our arrival fulfilled] the prop[h]ecies Isa 2, 3—‘And many people shall go and say Come let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord.’ &c..&c On the 16th of June we arrived in Independence (the centre of Zion or of the gathering of the righteous on this continent to prepare for the second coming of Christ).”<sup>44</sup>

In December Phelps received a letter from Joseph Smith instructing the leaders in Zion to include the names in the official history of all those who had formally consecrated their property and then received church land. The Prophet referred to the second coming of Christ, at which time this record would be used to reward “the saints whose names are found and the names of their fathers and of their children enroled in the Book of the Law of God.”<sup>45</sup>

While there were ominous signs of disturbance with their Jackson County neighbors, the Mormons felt that they were making considerable progress with their plans to establish the city of God, the New Jerusalem, their holy Zion. For the most part, the brothers and sisters in the gospel lived in harmony with each other in Missouri. They also yearned for the time when the Prophet Joseph Smith and all other Latter-day Saints in the East could be united with them in the city of God. Little did they realize that within a year their hopes and dreams would be seriously dashed and that the comforts they presently enjoyed would be but a memory. As for Phelps, in December he could relish the words of kindness, love, and trust from Joseph Smith and reflect on the great things that had happened in the last year and a half since leaving Anti-Masonry and the state of New York and joining the Church of Christ. But a major trial for him and his family awaited in the new year. Although in no way could the original inhabitants of Jackson County be excused for their lawless mob action against the Latter-day Saints, many of the problems in Zion, the Saints would discover, would be of their own making.

## NOTES

1. The number of employees and their names, as far as they are known, are researched and discussed in Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, “First Impressions: The Independence, Missouri, Printing Operation, 1832–33,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 10 (1990): 56–57, 64. The information that there were seven employees at the printing office comes from a petition to Missouri governor Daniel Dunklin written in November 1833 and recorded in “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” *EMS* 2, no. 15 (December 1833): 114.
2. “Items for the Public,” *EMS* 1, no. 2 (July 1832): [6]. Pearl Wilcox discussed both newspapers and their content and significance in *The Latter Day Saints on the Missouri Frontier* (Independence, MO: n.p., 1972), 45–48. Unfortunately, only small fragments of the *Upper Missouri Advertiser* are available to researchers today.
3. “Foreign News,” *EMS* 1, no. 5 (October 1832): [5].
4. The transcriptions of the revelations as published in *JSP*, *MRB* demonstrate that John Whitmer was the principal transcriber of the revelations that were to be published in Independence, Missouri.
5. *MB2*, 27; *FWR*, 49–50.

6. "The paper was hailed with joy by the Saints," reported Newel Knight, president of the Colesville Branch in Kaw. Cited in William G. Hartley, *"They Are My Friends": A History of the Joseph Knight Family, 1825–1850* (Provo, UT: Grandin Book, 1986), 86.
7. Robert Cathcart, "Awful and Alarming Statistics," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [5].
8. "To Man," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [6].
9. Stephen J. Stein, "Signs of the Time: The Theological Foundations of Early Mormon Apocalyptic," *Sunstone* 8, nos. 1–2 (January–April 1983): 65. For a thorough treatment of early Mormon millennial discussions, see Grant Underwood's seminal monograph *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1993).
10. "To Agents and the Public," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [6].
11. "Items for the Public," [6].
12. "Cultivate the Mind," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [4].
13. "To the Church of Christ Abroad in the Earth," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [6].
14. "Common Schools," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [6].
15. "To Man," [6].
16. "Hymns," *EMS* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): [8]. See also "Hymn 6," *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, comp. Emma Smith (Kirtland, OH: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), 12–13; William W. Phelps, "Redeemer of Israel," *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 6.
17. "Home," *EMS* 1, no. 10 (March 1833): [8].
18. "Songs of Zion," *EMS* 1, no. 12 (May 1833): [8].
19. "Songs of Zion," *EMS* 2, no. 13 (June 1833): 104.
20. "Song of Zion," *EMS* 2, no. 14 (July 1833): 112.
21. MHC, vol. A-1, 216; HC, 1:273; PJS, 1:384; JSP, D2:261n306.
22. "The Elders in the Land of Zion to the Church of Christ Scattered Abroad," *EMS* 1, no. 2 (July 1832): [5].
23. "The Gathering," *EMS* 1, no. 6 (November 1832): [5]–[6].
24. For a discussion of this issue, see JSP, R2:3–12 and Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, UT: Grandin Book, 1985), 46.
25. "Revelations," *EMS* 1, no. 12 (May 1833): [1].
26. "Items for the Public," [6]. "The Vision" is a title frequently given to the monumental vision beheld by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in February 1832 of the three degrees of glory afforded all mankind in the Resurrection. Section 76 is still considered one of the most important revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. See also JSP, MRB:414–33.
27. "Writing Letters," *EMS* 1, no. 4 (September 1832): [1].
28. "Twilight," *EMS* 1, no. 5 (October 1832): [8].
29. "Autumn," *EMS* 1, no. 6 (November 1832): [4].
30. Ronald E. Romig discusses this phenomenon in *Eighth Witness: The Biography of John Whitmer* (Independence, MO: John Whitmer Books, 2014), 172.
31. MB2, 28; FWR, 50–51.
32. D&C 68:25–31; JSP, MRB:198–201.
33. MB2, 29; FWR, 52.
34. MB2, 32–33; FWR, 57–58.
35. JSP, D2:261–72 and PWJS, 269–76 contain a copy of a lengthy letter dictated by Joseph Smith on July 31, 1832, and addressed to William W. Phelps. In the letter's opening line,

Joseph stated, "Broth[er] William I have received your letter dated 30th June and procede this morning to answer it."

36. D&C 72:17–26; *JSP, MRB*:236–41; *JSP, D2*:151–54.
37. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, as recorded in *JSP, D2*:262 and *PWJS*, 270.
38. *JSP, D2*:261–72; *PWJS*, 269–76.
39. This letter and its historical significance are found in *JSP, D2*:315–21. See also *MHC*, vol. A-1, 240–43; *HC*, 1:297–99.
40. D&C 85:1–12; *MHC*, vol. A-1, 241–42; *HC*, 1:298–99. The manuscript for this section does not appear in *JSP, MRB*.
41. *JSP, D2*:316.
42. "Let Every Man Learn His Duty," *EMS* 1, no. 8 (January 1833): [5].
43. These quotations come from the grammatically edited version in *HC*, 1:297–99 rather than from the original unedited version found in *MHC*, vol. A-1, 241–43 and *JSP, D2*:316–21.
44. Cited in Jan Shipps and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1994), 83; underlining in original.
45. This letter, dated November 27, 1832, is published and discussed in *JSP, D2*:315–21; *JSP, H1*:26.