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Funeral Sermon**



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As the hearse bearing the “bodies” of Joseph and Hyrum Smith (actually sandbagged coffins) passed the Nauvoo meeting ground the afternoon of Saturday, 29 June 1844, “William W. Phelps was preaching the funeral sermon.”<sup>1</sup> The choice of Phelps as eulogist to the Prophet and the Patriarch is strange, the content of his sermon stranger, the tone of that sermon strangest of all.

Mormon feelings were running high, and vengeance for the murder of the Prophet seemed imminent. Gentiles desperately feared that vengeance—the Carthage mob had retreated in panic from the jail site when they heard the shout, “The Mormons are coming!” Mormon leaders equally feared the possibility of violence from their people, and with good reason: Atoning for the “blood of the prophets” became a Mormon watchword following the Martyrdom. Allen Joseph Stout’s journal entry typifies the feeling of the time:

I there and then resolved in my mind that I would never let an opportunity slip unimproved of avenging their blood upon the enemies of the church of Jesus Christ. I felt as though I could not live; I knew not how to contain myself, and when I see one of the men who persuaded them to give up to be tried, I feel like cutting their throats. And I hope to live to avenge their blood.<sup>2</sup>

By the Monday following the Martyrdom, determination to avenge the prophets had reached such a pitch as to prompt a statement signed by W. W. Phelps, Willard Richards, and John Taylor, beseeching the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo to “be peaceable, quiet citizens.” That Monday morning plea for peaceableness makes all the more remarkable Phelps’s Saturday evening sermon. In the midst of extraordinary precautions by Nauvoo authorities, who were striving to calm the troubled waters of Nauvoo grief, W. W. Phelps seems, in his funeral sermon before ten thousand angry Saints, more intent upon inciting riot than upon preventing it.

A look at the character of the man himself may provide some understanding of the surprisingly incendiary tone of Phelps’s funeral sermon. William W. Phelps, a prominent Mormon poet, editor, and personal friend and scribe to Joseph Smith, was born in Hanover, New Jersey, 17 February 1792. Three days after the organization of the Church in 1830, he bought a copy of the Book of Mormon from Parley P. Pratt. An all-night reading

session left him with the impression he must join with the Mormons. He left the security of his editorship with the *Ontario Phoenix*<sup>3</sup> and moved his family to Kirtland, Ohio, “to do the will of the Lord.” Three days after his baptism, he left for Missouri with the Prophet and others to seek the land of Zion.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Smith quickly took advantage of Phelps’s editorial skills, appointing the new convert Church Printer in Jackson County, Missouri. He was given the responsibility not only to edit and publish the Church newspaper, the *Evening and Morning Star*, but also to publish three thousand copies of the Book of Commandments, plus an edition of the Church’s first hymnal. A July 1833 edition of the *Star* contained a Phelps editorial intended “to prevent any misunderstanding among the churches abroad, respecting free people of color.”<sup>5</sup> The editorial was viewed by “old settlers” in Jackson County as an invitation to free people of color to settle in Jackson County.<sup>6</sup> Phelps’s apology, an extra edition of the paper explaining that “our intention was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to his state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the Church,”<sup>7</sup> came too late. A committee of local citizens had already drawn up a “secret constitution” wherein they had “voted to raze the printing [office] to the ground.”<sup>8</sup> In less than one hour, they pulled down the printing office and destroyed the press.

Joseph Smith, perhaps regretting his choice of editor, selected Oliver Cowdery to reissue the *Star* in Kirtland. Apostle George A. Smith, cousin to the Prophet, later provided some interesting insight regarding Phelps’s editorializing:

Joseph asked my opinion of W. W. Phelps as an editor. I told him that I considered Phelps the sixth part of an editor, and that was the satirist. When it came to the cool direction necessarily entrusted to an editor in the control of public opinion—the soothing of enmity, he was deficient, and would always make more enemies than friends; but for my part, if I were able, I would be willing to pay Phelps for editing a paper, providing no body else should have the privilege of reading it but myself. Joseph laughed heartily—said I had the thing just right. Said he, “Brother Phelps makes such a severe use of language as to make enemies all the time.”<sup>9</sup>

Though W. W. Phelps did not serve again as a Church editor, he continued to serve the Church with other talents. He was a member of Zion’s Camp and personal scribe to Joseph Smith during the translation of the Book of Abraham. He even served as a member of the Presidency of the “Church of Christ in Missouri” with David and John Whitmer. Phelps’s poem for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, “The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning,” so impressed Joseph Smith that he requested it be printed on white satin for the dedication ceremonies. In addition to his

popular anthem, W. W. Phelps penned the lyrics for twenty-nine of the ninety-one hymns Emma Smith selected for the Church's first hymnbook. It was Phelps as toastmaster who first proclaimed Brigham Young "The Lion of the Lord," and Parley P. Pratt "The Archer of Paradise."<sup>10</sup>

In 1849, Brother Phelps assisted in drafting the constitution of the "State of Deseret." Two years later, he served as "topographic engineer" with Parley P. Pratt's exploring expedition to the south to "study the land for the site of possible settlements and for a road toward the sea."<sup>11</sup> That same year, he was sworn into office as "Councillor and attorney at law and solicitor in chauncery,"<sup>12</sup> became superintendent of Meteorological Observations of the Territory of Deseret, began furnishing the *Deseret News* with weather and astronomical information, and was named Speaker of the House of Representatives of Deseret Territory.

Despite his Church prominence, W. W. Phelps was excommunicated by both Presidents Brigham Young and Joseph Smith. Prior to official Church acceptance of plural marriage in 1852, Phelps, while in the eastern United States to obtain a printing press, "got some new ideas into three young women [and] they consented to become his wives." Apparently he had not previously cleared these marriages with Church officials, and by the vote of the Quorum of the Twelve on 6 December 1847 he was "cut off from the church for violating the Laws of the Priesthood in having women that do not belong to him [and] committing adultery with them."<sup>13</sup>

He had previously been excommunicated by Joseph Smith in 1838 for going against the Prophet's counsel by selling land in Missouri. The Prophet attempted to draw him back into the Church through a revelation which entreated: "Verily, thus said the Lord, in consequence of their<sup>14</sup> transgression their former standing has been taken away from them, and now, if they will be saved, let them be ordained as Elders in my Church to preach my Gospel and travel abroad from land to land and from place to place, to gather mine elect unto me, saith the Lord, and let this be their labors from henceforth."<sup>15</sup> However, W.W. Phelps ignored the revelation, making no overtures to Joseph requesting that he be accepted back into the Church. Joseph replied:

Come on, dear brother,  
since the war is past,  
For friends at first,  
are friends again at last.<sup>16</sup>

The depth of that friendship can perhaps be seen not only in Phelps's having been chosen to preach the funeral sermon but also in the nature of that sermon.

When, in the Church Archives, we came upon Phelps's 1855 recollection of the funeral sermon and realized it had never before been published,

we thought it best to present it in its entirety both for its dramatization of the ambivalence of feelings in Nauvoo toward avenging the Martyrdom and for its intrinsic interest. Whether or not this sermon he wrote in 1855 was made from a copy of his original speech or whether he rewrote it from notes or memory is not possible to determine at this time. We have retained Phelps's original capitalization insofar as we could detect it; Phelps tended to hedge his bets on potential capital letters—*G*'s, *S*'s, and *K*'s—so that it is impossible to tell from his handwritten manuscript whether he intended to capitalize such words as *God* and Kingdom or not. We have also maintained the original punctuation and spelling, despite such obvious problems as persistent omission of hyphens and cavalier word divisions, because Phelps used punctuation to shape his meaning.

As he points out in an explanatory headnote, this sermon is a copy of the original, made public again in Salt Lake City eleven years after the delivery in Nauvoo on 29 July 1844:

The Funeral Sermon

For the occasion of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith the prophet and Hyrum Smith the patriarch, who were shot by by [*sic*] a christian mob, in Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844—Delivered in Nauvoo on Saturday the 29 following by W. W. Phelps.

Revelation chap. 14, v. 13:—(corrected from the Greek) “and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write; congratulate the dead that die in the Lord from this time, verily says the spirit, for they can rest from their labors, and their works shall follow them.”

Saints and Sinners, thus said John on the Isle of Patmos, and thus say who have lived on the earth,

I in Nauvoo. Two of the greatest and best men, ^ who have lived on the earth, since the Jews crucified the Savior, have fallen victims to the popular will of mobocracy in this boasted “Asylum of the oppressed”—the only far famed realms of liberty—or freedom, on the globe; and the sword of justice, that ought to glitter with vengeance to repel such an insult to humanity—and the rich boon of life, and the free pursuit of happiness, hangs in the closet; and the stately robes of jud[g]ment that might clothe the sons of freemen with “brief” authority to wipe off the stain of innocent blood shed by a philistine clergy and hypocritical people, from our national there

escut[c]heon, hangs there too; and ^ they will hang till Jehovah comes out [of] his hiding place and vexes the nations with a sore vexation:—for, righteously speaking, this people are lingering with the consumption, like with the scurvy a cruiser 7 years out Demagogue Seamen ^ on board of a long cruiser, and the [indecipherable] sharks are gliding after, in the wake, to swallow their victims, as soon as they in drop from the plank to the sea. So passes the world ^ wickedness.

Joseph Smith was the first apostle and seer that held the priesthood of God, and promulgated the fullness of the everlasting gospel, since this church was driven into the wilderness, after the old apostles fell a sleep; and the seed of the wicked one, schooled in corruption, and led by the spirits of the damned, in this instance before us, has done to our brethren what Cain did to Abel, killed the body to stop the power of the holy priesthood on earth; showing the wise that Satan and his followers fear and dread a channel of communication between God and men. These holy men, like Abel, like the ancient prophets; like Jesus, have not been slain for any evil done; told the truth,

oh no! but because they ^ chastened the ungodly in their sins, and offered salvation free, with works meet for the kingdom of God. We can rejoice at however,

savage affliction, ^ and congratulate our prophet and patriarch, that they have died it the Lord, and the spirit says they can rest from their labors and their

their works will follow them, while ^ persecutors, and this nation, and the ungodly of every nation, will wax worse and worse, till their cup of iniquity runs over, and they meet the blaze of Jehovah’s zeal and melt and burn up like pitch in the fire.

Sermon read by W. W. Phelps before the Deseret Theological Institute on Wednesday evening June 13th 1855, and being as near remembered by him as could be ^, a copy of the one delivered by him at the Funeral of Joseph Smith.

If I mistake not, Joseph Smith has been drag[g]ed into courts, to answer Christian hold convenience, and country custom, and satisfy the demands of the “elect” who wear a he these “little brief authority,” about fifty times; and  $\wedge$  always came out of  $\wedge$  gentile furnaces’ without the smell of fire from his garments: and what is most lovely and Jesus like, he never returned the compliment to fret the gizzard of this whole Cainspirited race. In fact, the priest and deacons, in Wayne county N.Y., tried their best to have him indicted for blasphemy, when he commenced the translation of the book of Mormon, where some of the sacerdotal high-way-men actually swore that Joseph was a conjurer, and was engaged in writing a religious Book to revive the house of Israel according to the prophets, as it was in old times. And not a few of the order of saint Satan after a bill of indictment was refused by the better sense of some wellwishing unbelievers in the then Christian arts, declared publicly that Jo Smith would have to stop his calculations about gathering Israel, that pestered the world too much in old times; and as to any more revelation or visits from angels—neither were needed, as the present generation were so much enlightened, it was nonsense to suppose God would have to teach a college bred Clergy. “False prophets were to arise: Beware”!

Well, the rule is, by their fruits ye shall know them; Do men gather grapes from or thorns;  $\wedge$  figs from thistles? what good deeds have followed the Christian exertions over the globe; with their bible societies, mite societies, missionary societies, and  $\wedge$  wealthy well divided retinue of Doctors of divinity to go with purse and script [*sic*] from sea to sea, and from land to land? Judge a righteous Judgment and open the doors of refinement in this secret of hypocrisy, debauchery and luxury, and open the curtain aside Jehovah from the heathen in their blindness, degradation and misery, and with  $\wedge$  you may say, “There is none that does good; no; not one.” But when this gospel, which our Elders preach, goes, God goes with it, and the hiring clergy of the present generation, like a “Jack O’ lanterns,” is only visible at a distance, hurrying or hovering over marshes and fens in the dark. Men and women believe; obey the ordinances, speak with tongues, gather and begin to walk by faith, waiting for a more perfect day of glory; and come from where they may, and be they of what tongue, kindred or people that is—they all believe in one faith, one baptism, one god and Father; and more still, in one prophet, a part of one kingdom, and one union, which so wonderfully causes  $\wedge$  all, both great [and] small to seek and find; knock and the door of heaven opens, and pray and the gifts and blessing, as they ever were, where the righteousness of the saints exceeded the false pretenses of much religion, are showered down like the dew upon grass, and the latter day saint, has only to raise his hands in the fulness of his eyes seeing, and heartfelt gratitude, and exclaim—O God thou art merciful to me, a sinner! Keep me from evil, and help me to do thy will.

gone

Joseph has  $\wedge$  to his royal kindred in paradise, from whom the keys, the power, and the mystery came, for the use and benefit of mortal and immortal beings; and remember, beloved friends, that while he lived here upon the earth, he conferred all the keys upon the apostles and others, and blessings of the priesthood, and Endowments,  $\wedge$  that are needed for the gathering

of Israel; for our washings and anointings, and sealings and adoptions and for sanctification and Exaltation, or for bringing up our dead from among the spirits in prison: ~~so~~ when the temple is made ready for the holy work: so we can go on from birth to age; from life to lives; and from world to heaven; and from heaven to eternity; and from eternity to ceaseless progression; and in the midst of all these changes; we can pass from scene to scene; from joy to joy; from glory to glory; from wisdom to wisdom; from system to system; from god to god, and from one perfection to another, while eternities go and eternities come, and yet there is room [?]<sup>u</sup>—for the curtains of endless progression are stretched out still and a god is there to go ahead with improvements.

Be assured, brethren and sisters, this desperate “smite” of our foes to stop the onward course of Mormonism, will increase its spread and rapidity an hundred fold: The bodies of our brethren are marred, by physical force; because the flesh was weak; ~~and the~~ but the priesthood remains unharmed—that is eternal without bengining [*sic*] of days or end of years; and the “Twelve,” (mostly now absent) are clothed with it, as well as others, and when they return, they will wear the “mantle” and step into the

the  
“shoes” of the “prophet, priest and king” of Israel: and then with <sup>^</sup> same power, the  
the same  
same God, and <sup>^</sup> spirit that caused Joseph to move the cause of Zion with mighty  
the  
power will qualify them to roll on the work until all Israel is gathered, and <sup>^</sup> wicked  
swept from the earth; The same spirit lights the saints; the same truth magnifies  
same

the promises; the <sup>^</sup> virtue exalts the meek, and the same cases hastens the same events for joy; so that I may say with the poet:—Mormonism—

“Warms in the sun; refreshes in the breeze;  
“Glows in the stars; and blossoms in the trees;  
“Lives through all life; extends through all extent;  
“Spreads undivided, and operates unspent.”

Anciently, as well as now, weak minded persons supposed that prophets and saints suffered death or trouble for their sins. I wish to correct this notion. The righteous are

<sup>u</sup>  
undo<sup>^</sup>btedly removed from evils to come by death; and chastened to learn the love of their father for their eternal welfare, but with a few questions and answers, I think friendship and punishment, and good and evil, will exhibit their own characters; so, let

of  
me ask—Was Joseph Smith the friend <sup>^</sup> gamblers, drunkards, robbers, fornicators, adulterers, liars and hypocrites? No; read his life from Vermont to Carthage Jail, and ever[y] line and every act, shines with virtuous principles, and words of wisdom, that warms this heart with a god like sensation that he labored like the angels with Sodom and Gomorrah, to save this generation from the “fire shower of rain.”

the  
Did Joseph ever grind the face of the poor, or intermingle with <sup>^</sup> wicked to  
rites  
ridicule the worship of God whether it related to the highest or heathen ~~rites~~ religion, as practiced in America, Europe Asia, or Africa? Not he; The revelations he brought forth are everlasting witnesses that he, like the savior, came not “to ~~feast and~~ eat drink and be marry, for tomorrow we die,” but to point out the way of life, and call upon all men, to repent and be saved.

Can the political pioneers of the day who are exploring every state, nook, river, mountain, plain, and ravine, for the elect's sake, and (may be) for "the lo[a]ves and fish[e]s," where with all to satisfy the cravings of nature; can one of them point to the time and place when he sought powers for political purposes—for self aggrandizement? Never; as Lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion, he was a saint in Epauettes and prayed as devoutly to the Captain of his salvation, as the Captain and great High priest of this whole world prayed to his Father in the garden of Gethsemane, where he sweat blood for the folly of Jerusalem. As mayor of Nauvoo, he magnified the law and made it honorable for saint and sinner; he knew what was right and did it, independent of consequences—with a "Thus saith the Lord." [Vision V 1.]<sup>17</sup>

Like the sun in his meridian splendor, Joseph Smith shown [*sic*] a full man, at home, among his friends, in the fields, on the bench, or before the world; a pattern parent; a worthy friend; a model general; a righteous judge, and the wisest man of the age, sustained by truth, and "God was his right hand man." Surely, as one of the holy ones commissioned by his father among the royal seventy, when the high council of heaven set them apart to come down and "multiply and replenish this earth," he was the "last," and who knows but the "greatest," for he declared—we—~~knew not who he was!~~ So, I may say, as the last is to be first, and the first last in eternal rotation, that Joseph Smith,

the  
who was Gazelem<sup>18</sup> in the spirit world, was, and is, and will be in  $\wedge$  endless progress of Eternity:—the Prince of Light.

ever  
'Tis so, and who can dispute it? Where  $\wedge$  he reasoned on the old prophets, his  
of existence,  
words lit up a sacred flame, in the heart of the saint that showed an ocean  $\wedge$  unexplored  
out  
by the vain philosophy of the world; when he poured  $\wedge$  his eloquence, the gentile,  
rights  
on the reserved  $\wedge$  of all fools, declared I would rather go to hell than believe that  
go!

imposter—and who cannot but say, amen!  $\wedge$  and when he spoke of men, he read their history and secrets from their own hearts, without trying the patience of Job, or wasting the life time of Methuseleh, to hunt excuses to cover their sins: what he knew came  
stand

natural; without going to Solomon to under  $\wedge$  wisdom; or plodding through Blackstone<sup>19</sup> to learn what constituted the first principle of right; or reading a half a world full of [indcipherable] ious novels to arrive at the purity of virtue; he quoted the finer  
of

sentiments of morals, divinity, legislation, and laws, with strictest rules  $\wedge$  society and etiquette, as if he had learned them in his mother's lap; and though they were original with him, they were always correct. He was a man of God.

were  
Nor  $\wedge$  these the only gems that shined from his celestialized mind; he seemed to have been educated among the sons of God, where the "morning stars" sang together,  
could or describe

and  $\wedge$  weigh  $\wedge$  consequences, materiality, kingdoms, ~~and~~ and their inhabitants, with a familiarity as simple as a farmer's boy would describe his father's orchard: The  
said he,

present light of the sun,  $\wedge$  came from the "clouds of heaven," which surrou $\wedge$ ded it;

when they came away with the savior, to fulfill his second coming, the sun <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ be ,  
 darkened and all flesh, that remains, <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ see it—and, the viel, [sic] which is now  
 spread on all nations, being removed, we, the saints, <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ see as we are seen, and know  
 as we are known; and Zion, being gathered as the best of saints from many creations,  
 will hold a grand jubilee, of prophets, priests and kings, with their wives, and children,  
 for the purpose of crowing the faithful to enter into the joys of their Lord; prepar[a]tory  
 to their going into eternity to multiply and replenish new worlds,—For as Jehovah says  
 his name is “endless and eternal,” so the increase and government of the kingdoms  
 have no end; Amazing thought! But who has numbered the gods, or their kingdoms?  
 Who has been up to the Highest to behold his perfection, improvement, and ceaseless  
 progression? Or who has surveyed the cosmonam [?], where matter generates and space  
 swells into room for everything? Aye who? I will give the life time of the Almighty for  
 the answer to come, and time again to the prophet and patriarch who have <sup>gone</sup>  $\wedge$  to par-  
 adise to help the Holy one, wind up the wickedness of this world.

And what shall I say of the prophet. The Prince of light, he that pointed out the  
 faults in the wisdom of men, and demonstrated the folly ~~of~~ the philosophy of ages? He  
 that cut the chain cable of Christian convenience, with the sword of the spirit, as if  
 it had been a silken thread in the blaze of a candle? He that cut the gordian of knot of

its  
 with <sup>same</sup>  $\wedge$  scissors  
 bastard matrimony, <sup>that</sup>  $\wedge$  that Peter used to clip the gentile locks and Jewish curls, that  
 and flourished in families  
 grew ~~into-being~~ <sup>by</sup>  $\wedge$  order of Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, and Caesar ? He that took  
 of mail

truth for his pruning knife, virtue for his coat <sup>and</sup>  $\wedge$  God for his guide and undertook  
 to prune the vineyard of the Lord for the last time? What! in this age of inventions, fly-  
 ing intelligence, and self shining glory, what shall I say of Joseph the seer, whose inno-  
 cent blood stains the land of freedom, stains the halls of legislation; stains the judges’  
 bench; stains the priests’ pulpit; and stains the nation’s panoply—yet, what shall I say

of this patriot of purity? I will <sup>say</sup>  $\wedge$  he was all he was—the agent of Jehovah to call on all  
 and call for  
 flesh to settle the trespass committed upon the word of the Lord ~~and-render~~ <sup>satisfac-</sup>  
 tion for the forcible expulsion, by the powers of “church and state,” of the holy priest-  
 and to make men render

hood; <sup>to give</sup>  $\wedge$  an account of the deeds done in the body—whereby the sacred order of  
 matrimony had been corrupted: and he came not from the hot-beds of college arts, and  
 university science to invent new creeds, and enlarge the breach of division, but he came,  
 of this world; to wake admiration;

without the “stolen thunder” of some pretty prince <sup>yes,</sup>  $\wedge$  he came self made, and fired  
 his own earthquakes to summon the world to judgment; he came, not in a tempest of  
 wrath, but in the still small voice of Jehovah with full power to restore the holy priest-  
 the

hood: he came not in [“]the whirl-wind of public opinion” but in <sup>simple</sup>  $\wedge$  name of  
 Jesus Christ with love that surpasses understanding, to from a “union” that astonishes

all the “powers that be,” and sets this the priesthood of Baal at defiance. And all hell  
 “a host of  
 howls” with <sup>^</sup> hired servants—to “kick up” for them!

He came to reveal the ancient history of Ephraim and Manasseh, mixed among the nations, the tribes of American Indian, unaccounted for by ~~this~~ the surplus notion of the learned, and, in their unlettered degradation, to report them as the “heirs apparent, for the benefit of morality, and eternal lives, of that Almighty power, which the world can neither give nor take: he came to bring the book of Mormon to light from its angel  
 the  
 guarded home in <sup>^</sup> hill Cumorah; and to translate it by the common sense of inspiration, and hurl [?] this boasted wisdom of the 19th century. He came in what is termed the age of light and reason, to stamp in letters of blood the “splendid religions’ [?] of the day, as a spiritual delusion, leaving as a frock fitted clergy, and stall-fed philosophy to  
 of  
 and  
 keep it from tumbling into the “slime pit,” <sup>^</sup> magnetism, masonerism, socialism, <sup>^</sup> debauchery; and he came with the keys unlock Pandora’s box of free thinking and “popular fury”—and he’s done it!

He came to give the commandments and law of the Lord, to build temples, and teach men to improve in love and grace, that the wise among men might gather out of spiritual Babylon, which is temporal and spiritual wickedness, untill [*sic*] instead  
 burned—  
 of church and state,—that Saints might “tithe” to save themselves from being <sup>^</sup> in the great day of God Almighty.—If Jesus came to die and rise, to lead captivity captive, so did Joseph come to die and increase the power to bind Satan: that eternal lives and  
 might  
 came  
 eternal progression ~~may~~ search the eternal round with out impidement [*sic*]. He <sup>^</sup> to  
 in  
 feel after the purses and consciences of this money loving generation and to push <sup>^</sup> the golden age, so that the wealthy may waste their millions in extravagance, while the poor starve unnoticed, unless the[y] trust in the Lord, and flee to Zion, and there prepare for the great day of battle and war! He came to establish our church upon earth, upon the pure and eternal principles of Revelation, prophets and apostles, for the holy reason, that God never acknowledges, and accepts a church upon earth, as his, without there is a prophet in it to tell of it.

He came fully posted to meet the Devil, or any of the Clerks—bowing as “gentlemen,”—or “fluttering” as ‘ladies’; gilded to attract attention; or cloaked to escape notice: and the devil knew it: For said he in one his great sermons, “Where ever I am the Devil is—to watch my progress—but he is a gentlemen”; by this you may know the saints from the sinner. The Mormon is a man; the Christian—a gentleman; So the hyp-  
 his

ocrite magnifies <sup>^</sup> neighbors faults; the Mormon minds his own business. ~~all f~~ [There is a small hole in the manuscript at this point.] ~~to settle the ho~~[ink blot] ~~can~~[?] ~~The~~  
~~our~~  
~~our~~ priesthood <sup>^</sup> generation (NOA[?])  
~~rep~~ [ink blot] ~~the~~ word of God; <sup>^</sup> ~~and~~ ~~prepare~~ for the day of judgment <sup>^</sup> He came  
~~n~~ ~~the~~  
 to ~~pu~~ <sup>^</sup> ~~ish~~ vice, and praise virtue; he came to darken <sup>^</sup> dungeons of lust, and light <sup>^</sup> the mansions of love; he came to expel the errors of ages, and teach men to walk in the light of the Lord; And he came to war against the devil and eternalize his privilege of dripping [?] vengeance, mixed with venom round the fire of the damn’d!

from us, but  
 He is dead, but he lives; he is absent ~~here, but~~ at home in heaven; he is where he can use the treasury of snow and hail; he can now direct the lion from the thicket to lay the gentile cities waste; and cause the young lion to go forth among the herds and tread down and tear in pieces and none can deliver. Wo to the drun[k]ards with Ephraim! and the great whore of Babylon! for their destruction is sure, and their end near. Pestilence, famine, fire, and the sword, will no longer lay backed up in the magazine of plagues reserved for superior occasion, but the still small voice of mighty angels waste on, whispers, waste on, ye scamps for the wicked, waste on, by sea and land: touch the high and the low, the bond and the free; the rich and the poor; Waste on! Waste on, till the consumption decreed all has made a full end of all the actions that forget God and have pleasure waste on! till in unrighteousness. And all eternity responds,—so let it be! great Babylon sinks like a mill stone cast into the sea, to rise no more!

Governor Ford<sup>20</sup> said, when Moses rose up in Egypt with a new religion, against stir what the priests were then practicing, there was a mighty all among the people, and all Israel had to leave; and so when Jesus came among the Jews with a new religion, they crucified him, and can the Mormons hope for anything less from our “higher order of “free” society” in these all United States? Can Mr. Smith with his phalanx of elders, right in the broad of face of all the wisdom, philosophy, improvement, and morality and above all, of long established churches, where religion like education, is liberally patronized and made popular? Can he, hope to pass the scrutiny of public opinion without encountering the same destiny that has attended all new religions? Then whirling on his heel observed, in a low tone to one of his aids,—“the trial must come.” and so it has.

But, Brethren and Sisters, Tom Ford is supposed to be one of those beings that believes when a child was born, that some person has died; and that the spirit of the dead one then enters the living child—but unfortunately, we must come to the conclusion from analogy, that when Tom Ford was born, no body died.

Perhaps this governor, like pharaoh, had his heart hardened to test the faith of the saints—that Israel might flee from the terrible enjoyment of freedom, where the constitution allows all men to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, if there is no new revelation to expose the sins of this people. In case there is—hush!

And yet the spirit whispers, what shall I say of Joseph the seer, cut off from his useful life in the midst of his years? Why, I will say that he has done more in fifteen years, to make the truth plain—open the way of life; and carry glad tidings to the meek—the

whereby Israel, or more properly the sons of Joseph, mixed with all gentiles, can hear the long expected “call”—come home my children for the day of your release is near, years,

than all Christendom has done in fifteen hundred all with money, press, and a hired clergy: Joseph Smith, as the savior predicted, has sent the gospel to the poor, without purse or script [*sic*]; without the Right Reverend D. D. of Yale, Oxford, Gotham, or Nicholas of Russia, to lend a helping hand as prime minister of the church militant; none of these lambskin sacerdotals, not even the Archbishop of Canterbury, or Pope of

Rome, have so much as nodded good luck to the boy that hunts for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And yet, glory to God, ~~in~~ the highest, the very dust has spoken; the meek have heard; the wise have come; and the everlasting gospel is being preached to all nations as a testimony that the last days are here and the wicked must perish.

Tell the world, and let eternity bare record, that the great name of Joseph Smith will go down to unborn worlds and up to sanctified heavens, and gods, with all his shining honors and endless fame <sup>as stars in his crown,</sup> ~~will only~~ be <sup>can only</sup> echoed written in their ashes. Well may it be ~~written,~~ congratulated the dead that die in the Lord, for in this time, verily says the spirit, for they can rest from their labors, and their works shall follow them. All hail the <sup>sad</sup> triumphant deed! The souls under the altar, that John saw, hail it as the harbinger of Jehovah's vengeance! The "little season," when their fellow-servants, and brethren should be slain for the truth's sake, as they had been in past ages, has come! While the Delilah of the gentiles is kissing her paramour, and clipping his locks, singing softly:

ly [?]  
 "Hush my dear, ~~sit~~ still and slumber,  
 Ladies always  
 "Angels ~~near~~ guard thy bed;  
 "All thy blessing, with out number,  
 We have  
 "~~I am~~ taking from thy head."

Joseph has escaped through blood to bliss to fire the indignation of the holy ones <sup>ever</sup> who wrote the destinies of men! And he is an angel now, and if ~~evr~~ there was a time when the "vials of wrath," ought to be poured out upon the wicked—it is now and hence! and who can do it better than Joseph? The earth is rip<sup>ening</sup> and hell is merry with misery, so, rejoice ye saints, for the triumph of the wicked is short; they can kill the <sup>in</sup> body, as we have <sup>for all sin:</sup> this sample, but mormonism is a celestial medicine, and must be

applied as the sovereign remedy<sup>^</sup>: After the lawyers, and judges, and juries, and doctors, and priests, and statesmen, and people have spent their judgment upon the case, and squandered their means and mites, to cover up crime, and set the murderers free, then, yes my friends, then the union of players, the long suffering of patience, the quellings of virtue, the diligence of sincerity, the widow's mourn and the orphan's tears, will most certainly move Jehovah to vex this nation, and all nations, that have rejected, and slain his prophets and apostles: Then comes the day of calamity: then passes this <sup>distress and</sup>

bitter cup: then, brethren and sisters, we can laugh at their <sup>trouble;</sup> and mock when their fear comes; to witness how severely easy the Lord can sprinkle the "hot drops" of heaven upon the gentiles to consume their proud flesh, and fit their impure souls for an apprenticeship in hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Our God you know has parts and passions, and when he enters into judgment with our persecutors and has sufficiently troubled them on earth, I mean such pseudo gentlemen, as Cain, Nimrod, Korah, Judas, Herod, Boggs,<sup>21</sup> Ford and their associates,

I have an idea, that the resurrected saints, who have come up through great tribulations, will give them, in return, for their practiced science of satan, a turn or two of even handed justices, when they bind them in fetters of brass and iron; and bid them an everlasting farewell and faithful execution of the judgment written, for his honor have all the saints. Praise ye the Lord!

The prophet and patriarch have gone to paradise to bear testimony of the wickedness of the world, and help hasten the deliverance of the saints. Joseph goes back among his old associates of the other [?] world, who have waded through like scenes of affliction in the several ages past, and being beyond the power of death, as he was mighty for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, among good men, to raise and exalt them for eternal lives; how much more almighty will he be with the spirits of just men made perfect, and the Holy ones, to prune the vineyard; remove the bitter branches; and give room for the speedy fulfillment of his great and last revelation? And how long, as Daniel said, to the end of these wonders? How long till the children of Israel, gathered from the four quarters of the earth, will begin to multiply according to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and endorsed by the Savior with an hundred fold of wives and children? Verily, how long till the Israel of God becomes as numerous as the sands upon the sea shore; as the stars of the heaven for numbers; and death and the devil have no power to ~~steal sheep?~~ trouble the saints upon the earth? And the Spirits echo—How long?

To close, I will say, the blood of all the prophets, shed from Abel to Joseph must be atoned for; the debts must be paid, whether in blood for blood, or life for life, matters not; when man takes what he cannot restore; let him die the second death, when “there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,” and learn our perfect rule of right, that no murderer inherit eternal life: It is all one to us what the mob does with their work hands; the great day is at hand; the master trump sounds; wake the world for the

the  
conflict of power; let the spirits of  $\wedge$  damned enter their comrades as the legion did the

$\wedge$  swine; bring out the foes of all good, from Cain to the flood; from Ham to Babel; from Nimrod to Sodom; from Abimelech to to [*sic*] Egypt; from Pharoah to to [*sic*] the

a  
185,000 spirits that met the angels of war; and all ~~as~~  $\wedge$  postate vagabonds, from the angel  
them

of war’s glorious night till now, and let  $\wedge$  help their fellow sinners soar away: a few more daring deeds, a few more desperate cases; and fate will ~~will~~ call home his little

sin ~~sin~~ further  
haven [?] of the  $\wedge$  black  $\wedge$  while the trumps sound that unexpected sentence: it is finished! it is finished! The saints are free; Jehovah’s won the victory, and not a righteous man is lost! Amen.

[It is clear in the handwritten manuscript that the original version ended at this point. The final, more conciliatory paragraph, written in slightly smaller handwriting than the rest of the sermon, was apparently added as an afterthought by Phelps.]

To the real mourners, and all saints are such, let me say, mourn not; these sons of  
comfort  
god are safe; dry up your tears; confess the hand of the Lord in all things, and ~~see the~~  $\wedge$

June 13th 1855  
 W.W. Phelps funeral [sic] sermon  
 of Joseph & Hyrum

the  
 each other with <sup>^</sup> sweet hope that their lives were precious in the sight of all  
 damning this blast of Satan,  
 heaven; and <sup>^</sup> that “the fighters are leaving, the summer is near”; Urge  
 not the gentiles to punish their criminals; neither seek revenge, but soothe  
 one another with the promise that the harvest of the earth is nigh. and, that  
 vengeance  
~~judgment~~ belongs to the Lord and he will repay: our Savior said, pray for  
 thine enemies: So when they rage, pray; when they revel, fast; when they kill,  
 watch; when nation wars with nation, hark; when judgments sweep, die; and  
 when Jehovah speaks, do; that in the hour of wo every saint may live by faith.  
 and be ready to enter into that joy and rest which eye hath not seen, ear hath  
endless  
 not heard, nor a heart of flesh thought of; the <sup>^</sup> peace of God. Amen.

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1. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932–51), 6:628.

2. Journal of Allen Joseph Stout, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, p. 19 (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

3. This newspaper was an anti-Masonic publication. W.W. Phelps previously had edited two other anti-Masonic papers, the *Western Courier* and *Lake Light*.

4. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901–36), 3:692; *History of the Church*, 1:184–86, 188.

5. *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833; *History of the Church*, 1:377

6. *Evening and Morning Star extra*, 16 July 1833, *History of the Church*, 1:375, 378–79, note.

7. *History of the Church*, 1:378–79.

8. “John Witmer’s Manuscript History,” Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, The Auditorium, Independence, Mo. (microfilm in Church Archives), p. 43.

9. *History of the Church*, 5:390–91.

10. *Deseret News*, 8 March 1851, p. 221; *Times and Seasons*, 5:765.

11. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier—The Diary of Hosea Stout 1844–1861* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah/Utah Historical Society, 1964), 2:365, n. 34.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 406–7. See also Walter Dean Bowen, “The Vesatile W. W. Phelps—Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer” (Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958), p. 160.

13. Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Meeting, 6 December 1847, Church Archives.

14. This revelation was also addressed to Fredrick G. Williams, former member of the First Presidency.

15. Revelation given, 8 July 1838, *History of the Church*, 3:46.
16. *History of the Church*, 4:164.
17. This reference, including the brackets, are in the original manuscript.
18. See Alma 27:33 and Doctrine and Covenants 78:9, 82:11, 104:26, 43.
19. Sir William Blackstone (1723–80) was a noted English jurist.
20. Thomas Ford (1800–1850), elected governor of Illinois in 1842, assumed personal responsibility for Joseph Smith’s safety in Carthage Jail.
21. Lilburn W. Boggs (1792–1860), elected Lieutenant Governor of Missouri in 1832, became governor upon resignation of Daniel Dunklin in 1836; he issued the infamous Mormon “extermination order” in October 1838.