

Section 55

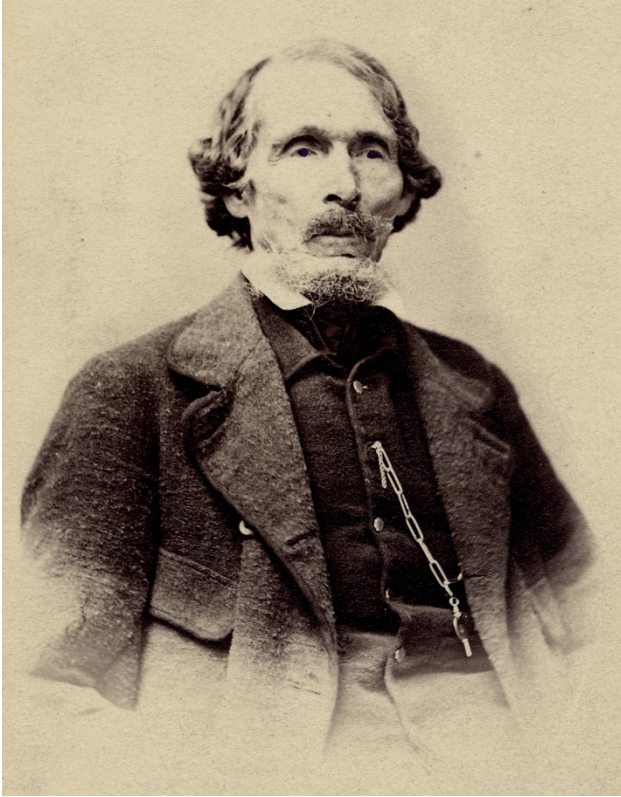
William Phelps edited the *Ontario Phoenix* newspaper in Canandaigua, New York. He was all mixed up inside. He aspired to prestigious offices, could be strikingly arrogant and condescending, and within weeks of the publication of the Book of Mormon he gained a deep and abiding testimony of it. After several months he visited Joseph Smith and determined to “quit the folly of my way, and the fancy and fame of this world, and seek the Lord and his righteousness.”¹

Shortly after most of the Saints in New York left to gather to Ohio, William gave up his newspaper and set out with his family to gather with the Saints. He arrived in Kirtland in June 1831 and told Joseph he had come “to do the will of the Lord.” Joseph asked the Lord what that was and the Lord answered with section 55.²

In section 55, the Lord continues to recruit talent into his Church to lay the foundation of Zion. William was called to assist Oliver Cowdery as a printer, editor, and writer for the church, including producing books for the education of children. This calling requires William to go to Missouri with Joseph and Sidney to settle and work there. The Lord commands Joseph Coe to go with them also and promises to reveal more later according to his will.

¹ William W. Phelps, “Letter No. 6,” *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, April 1835, 1:97.

² “[History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 \[23 December 1805–30 August 1834\]](#),” p. 124, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 30, 2020.



William W. Phelps. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

William Phelps obeyed section 55. He submitted to baptism and confirmation. He traveled with Joseph to Missouri and became the Lord's printer there. He published the Church's first newspaper, hymnal, and Joseph's revelations. Joseph Coe also responded to the Lord and traveled to Missouri to obey section 55.