

Singing the Word of God

Five Hymns by President Frederick G. Williams

Frederick G. Williams

Although largely overlooked today, Frederick G. Williams (1787–1842) wore many hats and played an important role in the early days of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was Second Counselor in the First Presidency (1833–37); a personal scribe to the Prophet Joseph Smith (1832–36); the principal doctor for the Saints in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois (1830–42); military commander, spy, scout, historian, doctor, and paymaster for Zion’s Camp (1834); trustee of the Church-sponsored Kirtland School (1835); publisher of the first LDS hymnal and Doctrine and Covenants (1835); artist for the plans of the Independence Temple and the Kirtland Town Plat (1835–36); editor of the Church’s *Northern Times* newspaper (1835–36); an officer of the Kirtland Safety Society “bank” (1836–37); a justice of the peace in Geauga County Ohio (1836–37); and a landowner in Kirtland who retained his farm so that the Lord would have a “strong hold” in the city for five years (D&C 64:21). Thanks to a recently catalogued document found in the LDS Archives in Salt Lake City, we can now add hymn writer to the list of Williams’s accomplishments.

It will be the purpose of this article to establish Frederick G. Williams as the author of five restoration hymns—originally published in *The Evening and the Morning Star*, later in the first hymnal and in subsequent LDS hymnals—using a series of important evidentiary steps. Perhaps even more importantly, a close-reading comparison will show that the hymns were inspired by a personal gift of tongues experience that was recorded by President Williams in the Kirtland Revelation Book in 1833; hymn texts deriving their language from a miraculous gift of tongues experience is a singular occurrence in Church history. This article will also trace the provenance of the recently catalogued document from Emma Smith through

Frederick G. Williams

It has been a desire of mine for many years to see a comprehensive biography on Frederick G. Williams, my progenitor and namesake, come to fruition. The first significant step toward this goal began when my wife, Carol, and I moved from South Gate, California, to Provo, Utah, to attend Brigham Young University in 1965. We determined to do research in the Church Historian's Office of the LDS Church and to visit with as many



relatives as we could find. The Church archives had a file containing President Williams's papers, and they also had his portrait and his 1837 medical ledger. We were permitted to copy the file and portions of the ledger. The most fruitful contact among President Williams's descendants was my Aunt Elizabeth Williams Rogers, who turned over to me assorted papers, letters, and journals that her mother, Nancy Abigail Clement Williams, had used in writing her book, *After 100 Years* (1951), the first biography on Frederick G. Williams.

The second significant step came when Carol and I moved to Madison to attend the University of Wisconsin for my MA and PhD degrees in Luso-Brazilian literature. During the five years we lived there (1966–1971), we took advantage of the relative proximity to Nauvoo, Illinois, and Kirtland, Ohio, and traveled to those and other Church history locations, searching for documents. We copied President Williams's probate file in Quincy, Illinois; portions of the *Quincy Whig* newspaper; civil records in Kirtland and Chardon, Ohio, that touched on his career as a doctor and as a justice of the peace; and records of deeds and taxes. From the stories that had been handed down and collected by Frederick G. Williams's descendants in Utah and from the civil records we copied in the Midwest, I was able to write "Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church" (*BYU Studies* 12, no. 3 [1972], 243–61). Over the years, while teaching and publishing in Portuguese studies, I would also take short vacations to Utah to do additional research on President Williams in the Church History Library, and would occasionally

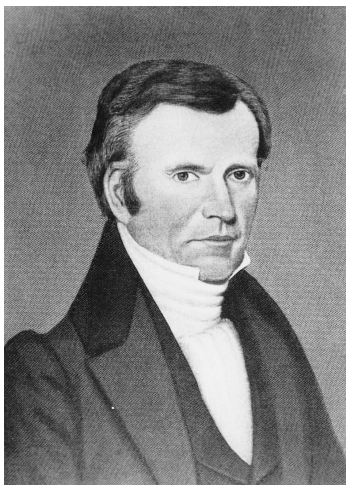
publish my findings, such as the 1988 article “Did Lehi Land in Chile? An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement,” a sixteen-page paper published by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University.

The third significant step was taken in 1999 when I accepted the invitation to join the faculty of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at BYU, after twenty-seven years teaching at the University of California (first at UCLA and then at UCSB). The move to Utah was providential, for it allowed Carol to sing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and it gave me an opportunity to be near the Church History Library and near professional historians to aid me in my quest. At the family reunion of the descendants of Frederick G. and Rebecca S. Williams, held in Salt Lake City in August of 2006, the Church History Library and Museum of Church History and Art were asked to join together to mount an exhibit on our progenitor. On display in one of the cases was a sheet containing songs written by Frederick G. Williams. I had never seen this document before. I soon learned that it had only recently been catalogued with the other papers belonging to Frederick G. Williams. I immediately began investigating the document’s provenance and sought to learn whether any of the songs had ever been published.

the son of her second husband, Major Lewis Bidamon, until it was donated, along with a cache of some eighty-five other Joseph Smith-related papers, to the LDS Archives in 1937 by Mormon documents collector Wilford C. Woods. The following pages will also highlight the subject of the songs and their significance as the first hymns to focus on the vision of Enoch, revealed to Joseph Smith in November and December of 1830, regarding the Second Coming of Christ, the establishment of Zion, and the return of the city of Enoch at the beginning of the Lord’s millennial reign.

The First LDS Hymnal

In July 1830, three years after Joseph Smith’s marriage to Emma Hale and three months after the Church was organized, the Prophet received a revelation (today’s D&C 25) at Harmony, Pennsylvania, for Emma, then twenty-six years old. Among other things, she was told by the Lord “to make a selection of sacred hymns” (v. 11). Due to a number



Frederick G. Williams

of stressful events in her personal life—which included moves from Pennsylvania to New York and from New York to Ohio in the dead of winter, ill health, her husband’s tarring and feathering episode, multiple pregnancies, and the deaths of several children, plus the 1833 destruction of the press in Missouri that had been slated to publish the hymnal—Emma was unable to comply fully with the Lord’s charge until five years later when the first LDS hymnal, *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, was finally published by F. G. Williams & Co. in Kirtland, dated 1835.

It is likely that soon after the revelation in Pennsylvania, word spread among the members that a hymnal was being considered. However, it was not until the experienced hymn writer and newspaper editor William W. Phelps, then thirty-nine years old, joined the Church in June 1831 and settled in Missouri that same year, that the hymn project started to move toward publication. On April 30, 1832, the original six-member Literary Firm of the Church met in Independence, Missouri, to discuss several items, including the printing of the Book of Commandments, a Church almanac, and a hymnal. The decision reached regarding the latter reads as follows: “Fifthly: Ordered by the Council that the Hymns selected by sister Emma be corrected by br. William W. Phelps.”¹ A month later, on May 29, 1832, the printing office of W. W. Phelps & Co. was dedicated in Independence, Missouri.² In addition to the three scheduled printing projects mentioned above, Phelps began to publish (in June 1832) the first LDS newspaper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*.

The *Star* provided a publication outlet for the hymns being considered for the hymnal, and indeed a total of twenty-eight hymns, songs, and poems were printed (but without author attribution) on the back pages of the first fourteen issues of the *Star* before the press was destroyed in July

1. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 46.

2. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 49–50.

of 1833.³ Today we know that some of those hymns were borrowings from popular Protestant hymns and adapted with new words that were more consistent with the restored gospel.⁴ The destruction of the press delayed the publication of the hymnal and of the Book of Commandments (which was later published as the Doctrine and Covenants)⁵ for another two and a half years and moved the site of their eventual publication from Independence, Missouri, to Kirtland, Ohio. The *Star*, likewise, moved its operation to Kirtland and began publishing again in December of 1833. The Doctrine and Covenants, the hymnal, and the Kirtland-based *Star* were all published by F. G. Williams and Co.

Of those original twenty-eight poems printed in the Independence-based *Star*, twenty-one were included in the original LDS hymnal of 1835. Since there were a total of ninety hymns published in the first hymnal, an additional sixty-nine were selected over the next two and a half years. We may speculate, therefore, that besides the destruction of the press and the busy schedules kept by Emma Smith and W. W. Phelps, the delay in publication of the hymnal might have also been a conscious decision on the part of Emma or the Prophet to allow time for the composition of new hymns that conformed to the restored gospel.

Awaiting the composition of new Restoration hymns may have been a factor, but there is no doubt that the major impetus for completing the work on the hymnal was the nearing dedication services for the Kirtland

3. Although anti-Mormon sentiment undoubtedly included the soon-to-be-published Book of Commandments, the immediate focus of the press's destruction was an angry response to the editorial "Free People of Color" in *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which the Missourians interpreted as a Mormon ploy to encourage and aid blacks into the slave state of Missouri and thereby tip the voting balance away from slavery. *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (July 1833): 109; hereafter cited as *Star*.

4. For example, Michael Hicks in his *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 12–13, compares some of the adaptations made by William W. Phelps to hymns written by non-Mormon authors John Newton, Joseph Swain, and Isaac Watts. More recently, Mary D. Poulter makes similar observations in her article "Doctrines of Faith and Hope Found in Emma Smith's 1835 Hymnbook," *BYU Studies* 37, no. 2 (1997–98): 34–36.

5. Technically speaking, the Book of Commandments was never published because the printed sheets, along with parts of the press, were thrown out into the street before they could be collected and bound together as a book. It is only due to the bravery and resourcefulness of two young girls, the Rollins sisters (Mary Elizabeth, age 15, and Caroline, age 12), who risked their lives to retrieve and hide some of the strewn folios, that we have sample editions of the book. See Mary's autobiographical writings in "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (July 1926): 196.

Temple. On September 14, 1835, an important decision was made by the Kirtland high council to move the work forward; the wording of the decision is similar to the one taken by the Literary Firm in Missouri three years earlier. "It was further decided that Sister Emma Smith proceed to make a selection of sacred hymns according to the revelation, and that President W. W. Phelps be appointed to revise and arrange them for printing."⁶ Hence, the first LDS hymnal was finally published, most probably in early 1836 (although the date on the title page is 1835), in time to be used at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple on March 27, 1836.

The Five Songs of Zion

The focus of this study is a grouping of five of the original twenty-eight poems that appeared in the pages of the fourteen issues of the *Missouri Star*. These five stand apart not only because they appear together in the last three issues, but also because of their unique designation as "Songs of Zion" rather than hymns or poems for the Church of Christ. Two appeared in May 1833 ("Age after age has roll'd away" and "Ere long the vail will rend in twain"),⁷ two in June 1833 ("My soul is full of peace and love" and "The happy day has rolled on"), and one in July 1833 ("The great and glorious gospel light").

The designation "Songs of Zion" is an important title, which in the *Star* distinguished them from the rest that were designated as either hymns or poems. In the first three issues of the *Star* (June, July, and August 1832), the poems that were printed were introduced with the following designation: "Hymns, Selected and prepared for the Church of Christ, in these last days." The fourth issue (September 1832) introduced two poems with the designation "Select Poetry." Issues five and six of the *Star* (October

6. Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 2002), 131. Helen Hanks Macaré, in her 1961 doctoral dissertation on LDS hymnals, used the traditional convention that poems are not considered hymns or songs until they are set to music. "Hymn" means any set of words included in any Mormon hymnal while 'poem' is defined as any set of words not so included." Helen Hanks Macaré, "The Singing Saints: A Study of the Mormon Hymnal, 1835-1950" (PhD diss., University of California-Los Angeles, 1961), 96. The authors of the poems, however, often wrote words to fit known hymn tunes and thus designated their poems as "hymns" or "songs." The most common poems for the most common of hymns are stanzas of four lines of iambic tetrameter rhyming *abab*.

7. In the *Star*, as well as in the 1835 hymnal (and in many subsequent hymnals also), "vail" is spelled with an "a" instead of an "e." For consistency, the word will appear as "veil" hereafter.

and November 1832) introduced poems with the designation “Selected Hymns.”⁸ Issue seven (December 1832) printed Isaac Watts’s beloved hymn “Joy to the World” under the title “The Second Coming of the Savior,” but without author attribution and without a designation. No poems were published in the *Star* number 8 (January 1833), and the two poems printed in number 9 (February 1833) carried the designation “New Hymns.” The next two issues of the *Star* (March and April 1833) published one poem apiece but without any designation. The final three issues of the Missouri *Star*—numbers 12, 13, and 14 (May, June, and July 1833)—published the five poems under consideration, each introduced with the singular designation “Songs of Zion,” again without author attribution. The “Songs of Zion” designation evidences their origins as songs and as part of a group.⁹

Provenance of the Document Containing the Five Songs

In July and August 1937, Wilford C. Wood, an LDS businessman from Utah and a dedicated collector of Mormon Americana,¹⁰ purchased two sizeable caches of documents connected to Joseph Smith and the early history of the Church from Charles E. Bidamon of Wilmette, Illinois, son of Major Lewis Bidamon, second husband of Emma Smith. Contemporary reports indicate that the number of documents acquired from Bidamon was over eighty-five. Of the documents identified in the news reports, perhaps the most significant is the so-called Joseph Smith “Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar,” which was listed as the manuscript of the Book of Abraham. The *Deseret News* reported the acquisition of the first group of documents under the title “Documents Obtained by Wilford Wood: Papers in Writing of Prophet Joseph Included.”¹¹

8. The designation in the November 1832 issue was actually “Selected Hymn,” even though two poems were published.

9. The July 1833 issue uses the designation “Song of Zion” because only one song was published.

10. In addition to the many documents he purchased and turned over to the Church, Wood also purchased many properties of historical importance, such as the Newel K. Whitney store and John Johnson home in Ohio, the Adam-ondi-Ahman property and Liberty Jail in Missouri, and the Nauvoo Temple lot and Carthage Jail in Illinois. A comprehensive listing of the documents retained in the Wilford C. Wood Museum in Bountiful was prepared by LaMar C. Berrett, *The Wilford C. Wood Collection, Volume 1: An Annotated Catalog of Documentary-Type Materials in The Wilford C. Wood Collection* (Provo, Utah: Wilford C. Wood Foundation and Brigham Young University, 1972).

11. “Documents Obtained by Wilford Wood: Papers in Writing of Prophet Joseph Included,” *Deseret News*, July 21, 1937, 13.

The number of documents obtained in July 1937 is listed at forty by Wood himself in a letter dated December 24, 1937, which he wrote to President Heber J. Grant.¹² The second cache of forty-five documents obtained from Bidamon by Wood and turned over to the Church was reported two months later, also in the *Deseret News* under the title “Book of Abraham Manuscript Is Found: Wilford C. Wood Gets Rare Documents on Recent Tour.”¹³

Form of the Williams Songs

Among the eighty-five documents obtained from Charles E. Bidamon and turned over to the Church Historian’s Office by Wilford C. Wood in 1937 is one containing all five “Songs of Zion” in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams, which I believe were also authored by him. It consists of two sheets with the five songs that had been published in the *Star*.¹⁴ Each song is written in numbered quatrains (or four-line stanzas), and each verse is in iambic tetrameter rhyming *aabb*, but not always consistently. The songs vary in length from four to twenty-three stanzas.

Only recently, on May 7, 2003, was this document catalogued under the author’s name.¹⁵ But as early as 1981, historian and handwriting expert Dean Jessee had identified the handwriting as that of Frederick G. Williams and had posited that Williams had authored the songs in 1831. The cataloguing information also mentions the provenance of the documents: it had been in the Wilford C. Wood collection and had likely been received

12. Berrett, *Wood Collection*, 1:72.

13. “Book of Abraham Manuscript Is Found: Wilford C. Wood Gets Rare Documents on Recent Tour,” *Deseret News*, September 9, 1937, 20.

14. The first sheet has three songs; the front side contains the first sixteen stanzas of Song 1, whose first line is “Age after age has rolled away.” On the back side of the first sheet are the remaining seven stanzas of Song 1 (for a total of twenty-three four-line stanzas). Also on the reverse of the first sheet are all four stanzas of Song 2 (“The happy day has rolled on”) and all five stanzas of Song 3 (“The great and glorious gospel light”). The second sheet, written on only one side, contains two songs: the four stanzas of Song 4 (“My soul is full of peace and love”) and the nine stanzas of Song 5 (“Ere long the veil will rend in twain”).

15. A second recent document in Frederick G. Williams’s handwriting was also catalogued on May 7, 2003, and is titled “Route and between Kirtland, Ohio, and Liberty, Missouri [ca. 1837]” (written on both sides). The cataloguing notes for this document state, “Item was among papers in ‘Pre-Nauvoo’ portion of Nauvoo subject file. Handwriting recently identified as Williams, indicating it was possibly received in Historian’s Office with other Williams papers in nineteenth century or was possibly in Williams account book, as two financial entries on document’s reverse match entries in that record.”

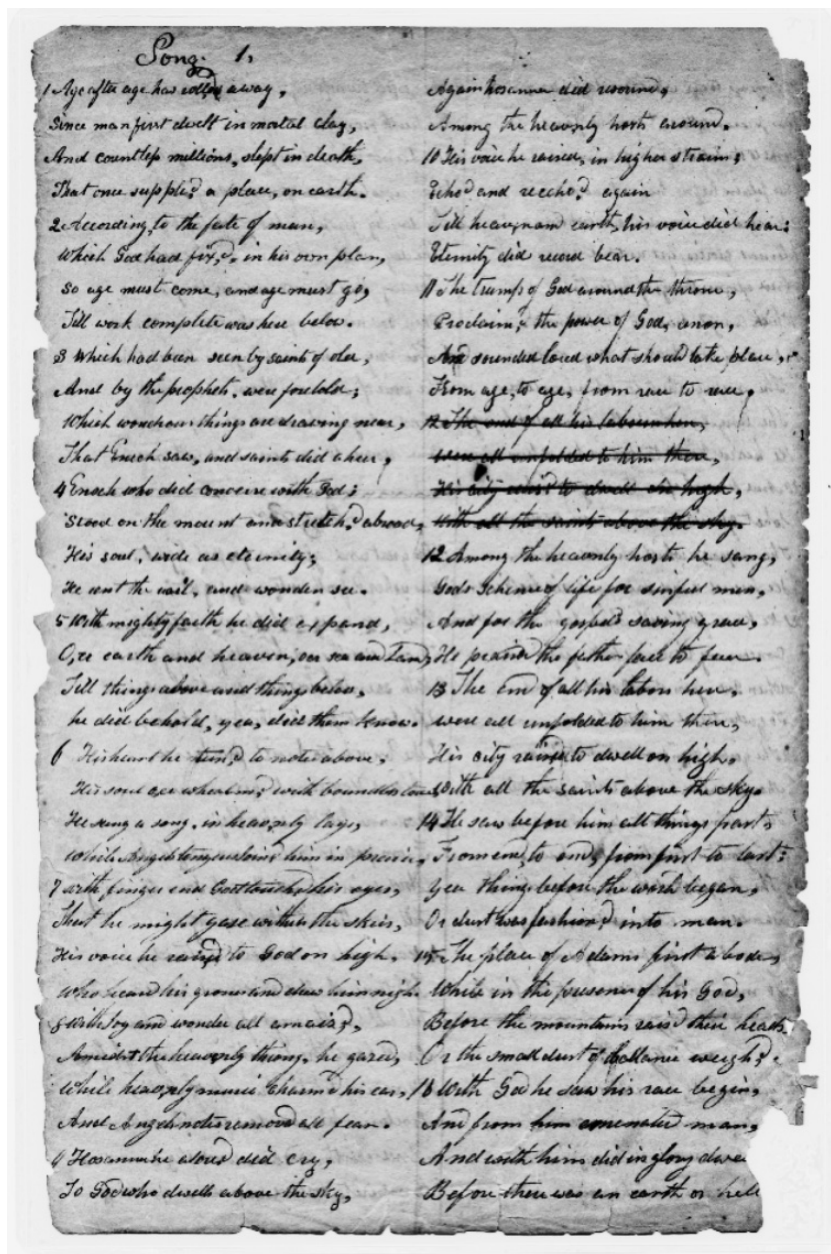


FIG. 1. This three-page document, obtained from Charles E. Bidamon in 1937 by LDS businessman and collector Wilford C. Wood, contains five "Songs of Zion" in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams.

From age to age what ere took place,
 Ever present then, before his face,
 And to the latest year of man,
 Was plain before him, his own plan.
 His eyes with wonder did behold,
 Eternal glories, yet untold
 And glorious things of latter time,
 Which angels have to tell to man.
 He then did hear in days of old
 The message that to John was told.
 The angel, which the news did bring,
 He heard him talk and heard him sing.
 And Jesus before the days of John,
 What glories were on him to dawn.
 The message which he did receive,
 He heard and saw and did believe.
 He knew full well what John should hear,
 Concerning times and latter year,
 When God again should set his hand,
 To gather Israel to their Land.
 The gospel then from darkest shades,
 Should shine, and go with rapid strides,
 Till nations distant, far and near,
 The glorious proclamation hear.
 The angel that this news proclaiming
 Should come and visit earth again,
 Commit the gospel long since lost,
 To men with power as at the first.

Song 2.

The happy day has rolled on,
 Whose precious now has come,
 Angel sure has come again,
 In whose mighty reign

2 The gospel trumpet again is heard,
 The truth from darkness has appeared,
 The Land which long in darkness lay,
 Have now behold a glorious day.
 3 The day by prophets long foretold,
 The day which Abraham did behold,
 The day that saints desired long,
 When God his strange work would perform.
 4 The day when saints again should hear,
 The voice of Jesus in their ear,
 And angels who above do reign,
 Come down to converse hold with man.

Song 3.

The great and glorious gospel light,
 Was ushered forth into my sight,
 Which in my soul I have received,
 From death and bondage being freed.
 2 With saints below and saints above,
 I'll soon to praise the God I love,
 Like David too I will proclaim,
 Halleluanna to his name,
 3 Hosanna let the echo fly,
 From pole to pole, from sky to sky,
 And saints and angels join to sing,
 Till all eternity shall ring.
 4 Hosanna! let the voice extend,
 Till time shall cease and have an end,
 Till all the throngs of heav'n above,
 Shall join the saints in songs of love.
 5 Hosanna, let the trumpet of God,
 Proclaim his wonder far and broad,
 And earth and air, and sky and seas
 Conspire to sound about his praises.

FIG. 2. Page 2 of the "Songs of Zion" document.

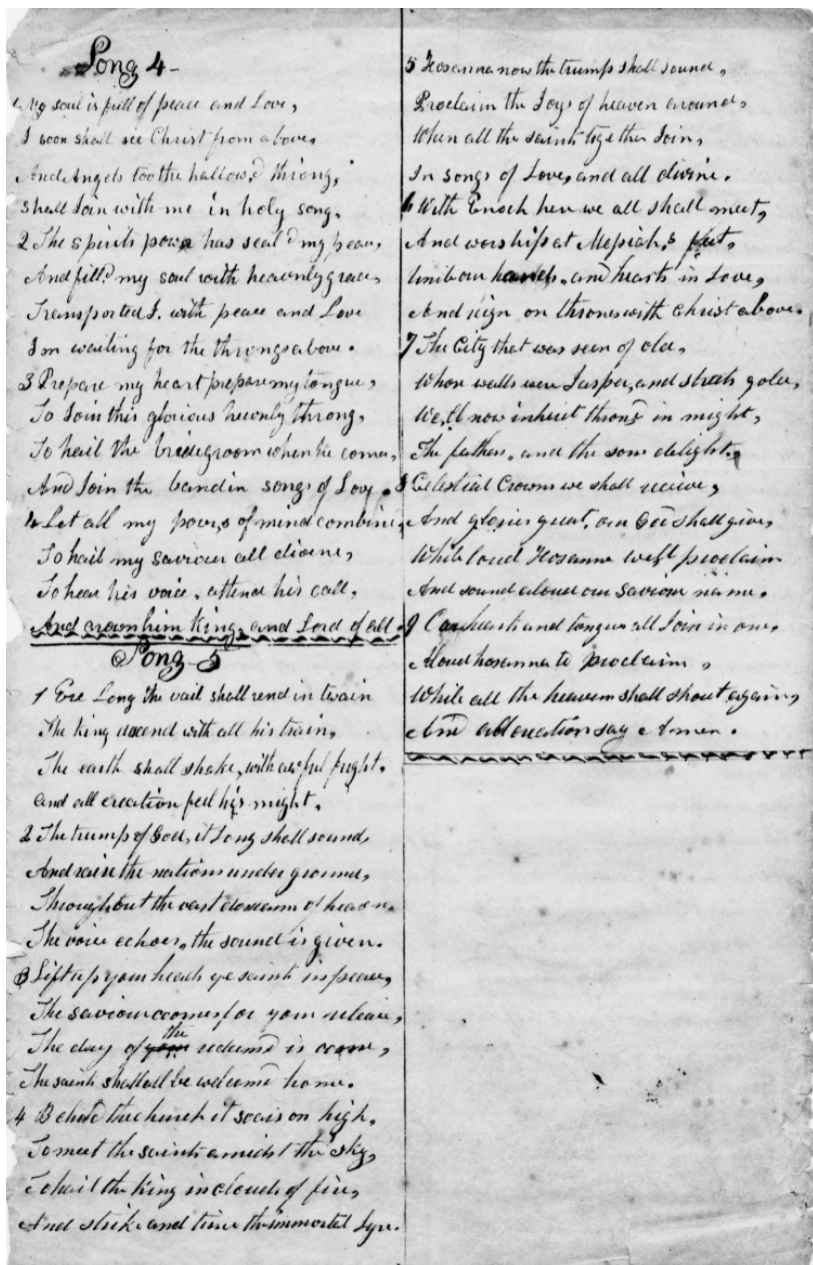


FIG. 3. Page 3 of the "Songs of Zion" document.

in the Historian's Office along with other Joseph Smith documents Wood had obtained.¹⁶

Direct Inspiration for the Songs

Dean Jessee, according to the cataloguing notes, posited that Frederick G. Williams might have received the inspiration for his songs from the Enoch revelation with which he may have become acquainted as early as 1831 while in Missouri. This may in fact be when President Williams first learned of the revelation, but there is a closer, more direct inspiration for the songs, which is recorded in the Kirtland Revelation Book. This bound volume contains fifty entries of revelations and prophecies, forty-four of which were included in the D&C, thirty-six of which are in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams.¹⁷

Recorded on pages 48 and 49 of the Kirtland Revelation Book is an interesting entry titled "Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated," dated February 27, 1833. The entry that immediately precedes it (pages 47–48), today's D&C 88, was received on January 3, 1833, and ends with these words: "Given by Joseph the seer, and written by F. G. Williams assistant scribe and counselor." The entry that immediately follows it (pages 49–51) is today's D&C 89, the Word of Wisdom, also dated February 27, 1833, and also in Frederick G. Williams's handwriting.

The Prophet makes no mention of a gift of tongues experience on February 27, 1833, in his writings, although the *History of the Church* does record the Word of Wisdom revelation received on that same day.¹⁸ Had there been a spiritual outpouring given to the Prophet and those in his company, the "Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated" entry would likely have stated as much. Virtually every other spiritual manifestation,

16. Frederick G. Williams, Songs [about 1831], cataloguing notes, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church History Library). A notarized bill of sale listed the documents that were purchased by Wilford C. Wood, among which was "Two pages of poems." See Richard L. Evans, "Illinois Yields Church Documents," *Improvement Era* 40, no. 9 (1937): 565.

17. The Kirtland Revelation Book is found at the Church History Library. H. Michael Marquardt, through Modern Microfilm, published a Xerox copy of the volume in 1979, and then published a more definitive, expanded edition as *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999).

18. 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 Book, 1971), 1:327 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

revelation, and prophecy found in the Kirtland Revelation Book indicates that it came through Joseph the Prophet, except this entry.

It would appear, therefore, that President Williams received his own personal gift of tongues and translation experience and, as one of the presidents, prophets, and seers entitled to revelation,¹⁹ recorded it among the spiritual manifestations in the Kirtland Revelation Book. By his own volition or perhaps at the suggestion of his wife, Rebecca, or the Prophet, Frederick G. Williams decided to render the spiritual outpouring in verse form, or as songs, perhaps with a view to having them form part of the LDS hymnal and thus be sung by the Saints. In any case, it was not long before Williams transformed the spiritual “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” experience into five “Songs of Zion”²⁰ and sent all five off to Missouri for publication in the *Star* where, as previously noted, they began to appear two months later, starting with the May issue of 1833.

Songs Published in First Hymnal and Sung at Temple Dedication

Besides being printed in the *Star*, four of the five songs by President Williams also appeared as a group, with minimal changes (mostly punctuation and capitalization), in the original 1835 LDS hymnal as hymns 19–22 (pages 25–29), but again without author attribution. It may not be a coincidence that Song 5, “Ere long the veil will rend in twain,” was sung by the choir at the Kirtland Temple dedication just before President Rigdon delivered the opening prayer. It was during the dedicatory prayer that President Williams saw a heavenly messenger “rend the veil” and take a seat beside him. The visit by the heavenly messenger was recorded, and the words of the song were published (again without attribution) in the dedication proceedings published in Kirtland by Oliver Cowdery.²¹

The four songs by Frederick G. Williams included in Emma Smith’s original hymnal of 1835 were also included in most of the subsequent LDS hymnals.²²

19. For example, at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple the Prophet presented, for a sustaining vote, the members of the Presidency as Prophets and Seers: “I then made a short address, and called upon the several quorums, and all the congregation of Saints, to acknowledge the Presidency as Prophets and Seers, and uphold them by their prayers.” *History of the Church*, 2:417.

20. A comparison of the Kirtland Revelation Book entry “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” with the five “Songs of Zion,” discloses that the same ideas and phrasings (sometimes the exact words) are common to both. See comparison later in this article.

21. *Messenger and Advocate* 2 (March 1836): 274–75, 281.

22. See Macaré, “Singing Saints,” addendum, which lists all hymn titles found in LDS hymnals from 1835 to 1950.

Song 2, “The happy day has rolled on,” appeared in the first five published hymnals (1835, 1838, 1839, 1840, as well as Emma Smith’s second hymnal of 1841) but not in C. Merkley’s 1841 hymnal (which only printed nineteen hymns), nor in the J. C. Little and G. B. Gardner hymnal of 1844. Thereafter it appeared in each of the subsequent hymnals published throughout the nineteenth century, including 1844 (Liverpool), 1849, 1851, 1854, 1856, 1863, 1869, 1871 (Salt Lake), 1871 (Liverpool), 1877, 1881, 1883, 1884, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1894, 1897, and 1899. It has also appeared in every twentieth-century hymnal including the one currently in use (1905, 1912, 1927, 1948, 1950, and 1985).

Song 3, “The great and glorious gospel light,” appeared in all nineteenth-century LDS hymnals except C. Merkley’s (1841). And although it appeared in the first three hymnals of the twentieth century (1905, 1912, 1927), it has been dropped from the last three (1948, 1950, and 1985).

Song 4, “My soul is full of peace and love,” appeared in nearly all of the nineteenth-century hymnals (except C. Merkley’s 1841 hymnal, and the 1843 and 1844 publications); it also appeared in the first two of the twentieth century (1905 and 1912), but it was dropped from the 1927, 1948, 1950, and 1985 hymnals.

Song 5, “Ere long the veil will rend in twain,” appeared in all the nineteenth-century LDS hymnals (except 1843) and in all except the last three hymnals of the twentieth century (1948, 1950, 1985).

Misattributions of Authors in LDS Hymnals

There have been plenty of missed and incorrect attributions regarding the authors of the early hymns of Zion. Helen Hanks Macaré points out, for example, that the hymn “Earth with her ten thousand flowers,” which appeared in the 1835 LDS hymnal, was incorrectly attributed to William W. Phelps for many years but was in fact written by Thomas Rawson Taylor.²³ The change in author attribution from W. W. Phelps to Thomas R. Taylor was not made, however, until the current 1985 hymnal. Another example Macaré lists of inaccurate author attribution of the hymns in the 1835 hymnal is “The day is past and gone” which was credited to Parley P. Pratt in 1869, many years after his death. The Pratt attribution continued until 1905 when John Leland was finally listed as the correct author.²⁴

In 1903, the *Deseret Evening News* published an appeal for information on the authors of hymns in the then-used LDS hymnal. The Church

23. Macaré, “Singing Saints,” 126. She further reports that “in 1905, Junius F. Wells, an assistant Church historian, ascertained by writing to John Julian that the poem had appeared in the ‘select remains’ of Thomas Rawson Taylor.”

24. Macaré, “Singing Saints,” 125.

was preparing a new hymnal, to be published in Liverpool, England, and desired to list the full names of the authors of the hymns.²⁵ In another section of the *News* of the same evening, a list was published of fifty-seven titles or first lines of hymns whose authors were unknown. Two of President Williams's songs were listed without attribution: "My soul is full of peace and love" and "The great and glorious Gospel light."²⁶

Considerations on Author Attribution of the Five Williams Songs

For our discussion on the authorship of the songs (especially for Songs 2 and 5, which were attributed to other people many years after Frederick G. Williams's death in 1842), it is important to note that the first LDS hymnal to include author attribution was the 11th edition (1856) of *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs: for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, first published in 1840 by Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor in Manchester, England.²⁷ It is also significant to point out that in that 11th edition, none of the four hymns under consideration were listed with an author. In the next edition, however, which was the 12th of *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, published in 1863 in Liverpool, England, Song 5, "Ere long the veil will rend in twain," was attributed to Parley P. Pratt, who had been assassinated in 1857. Sometime between 1856 (the 11th edition) and 1863 (the 12th edition) someone, perhaps George Q. Cannon, who is listed as the 1863 publisher, attributed the hymn to Pratt. For the remainder of the editions in the nineteenth century, the 13th (1869) through the 23rd (1899), Pratt was listed as the author. No authors were ever listed for the remaining three songs until the 24th edition, published in December 1905, where Song 2, "The happy day has rolled on," was attributed to Philo Dibble.

Song 1, "Age after age has rolled away," attributed to W. W. Phelps in 1989. This song was never included in any LDS hymnal, but the name of W. W. Phelps as author was linked to it in the late twentieth century.²⁸

25. "Who Can Give the Names?" *Deseret Evening News*, April 2, 1903, 4.

26. "Who Knows Them? A List of Hymns in the Latter-day Saints Hymn Book to Which the Names of the Authors Are Not Given," *Deseret Evening News*, April 2, 1903, 5.

27. The first edition was published in 1840 under the title *A Collection of Sacred Hymns: for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Europe*.

28. Michael Hicks, in *Mormonism and Music*, 36, noted the similarities between the content and even the phrases used in "Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated" and the first Song of Zion ("Age after age has roll'd away"), published in the *Star*. He compares portions of the two and, without any explanation, attributes the latter to W. W. Phelps, assuming no doubt that since Phelps was the editor of the *Star* and had published some of his own hymns in earlier numbers,

Could this poetic writing possibly be an expression by W. W. Phelps? He was, of course, a gifted poet and editor, so he could have done the versifying. Phelps was in Missouri and not in Kirtland on February 27, 1833, but all he would have needed to versify “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” was a copy of the transcript taken from pages 48 and 49 of the Kirtland Revelation Book, which Frederick G. Williams could have easily provided him. However, that raises an important question about the other four hymns, which are also derived from the “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated.” If these poetic writings are indeed the versified expression by W. W. Phelps, they most likely would have been attributed to him (along with the many other hymns he wrote) beginning in 1856, when author attribution first appeared in the 11th edition of the hymnal, *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs: for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. But they never were, and one of the five was even misattributed to P. P. Pratt while Phelps was still living. Phelps moved to Utah in 1849, was a member of the Legislature in 1851, and published Utah’s first almanac; he died in Salt Lake in 1872.

Could Joseph Smith be the one who rendered the gift of tongues experience into verse? Yes, of course; and to support this view he would later versify today’s D&C 76.²⁹ The Prophet could also be the author of “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated.” He was in Kirtland on February 27, 1833, where he received the Word of Wisdom (D&C 89). However, as we have noted, there is no mention of a gift of tongues experience in any of Smith’s writings on that date, and there is no written indication that “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” was received by the Prophet, which is the usual introduction to all the Kirtland Revelation Book entries, copied by Frederick G. Williams.

Song 2, “The happy day has rolled on,” attributed to Philo Dibble³⁰ in 1905. The most likely source for the misattribution is Philo Dibble’s son.

then “Age after age has roll’d away” must be his as well. Michael Marquardt in his *Joseph Smith Revelations* (231), cites Hicks and therefore attributes the “Song” to Phelps as well.

29. In January 1843, W. W. Phelps wrote in verse “From W. W. Phelps to Joseph Smith: The Prophet,” a sixteen-line poem in which he challenged Joseph Smith to respond in verse. Joseph answered in February 1843 with “A Vision,” containing seventy-eight stanzas. Both poems were published on the first pages of the *Times and Seasons* 4 (February 1, 1843): 81–85.

30. Philo Dibble (1806–1895) was born in Berkshire, Massachusetts. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 257. In 1830, when twenty-four years old, Dibble was baptized a member of the Church in Kirtland, Ohio, where he spent the night of his baptism at the home of Frederick G. and Rebecca Williams and received a spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of the gospel. Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith’s Kirtland: Eyewitness Accounts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 7.

Spurred by the above appeal published in the *Deseret Evening News*, Philo Dibble Jr. (his father had died in 1895) of Layton, Davis County, Utah, went to the Church Historian's Office on April 3, 1903 and made the following statement:

The hymn on page 266 of the 15th edition of the Latter-day Saints hymn book, published in Salt Lake City, 1883, commencing

“The happy day has rolled on

“The truth restored is now made known, etc. etc.”

was composed by my father, the late Elder Philo Dibble, Sen., as far back as the days of Missouri, 1831–1838. The authorship was a matter of frequent reference between my father and myself, and I urged him on several occasions to make it known that he was the author of this hymn.

In compliance with the request of the First Presidency that those having information relative to the authorship of hymns, I have hereby made this statement.³¹

We may never resolve who the author of Song 2 is to everyone's satisfaction. Although we do not have Philo Dibble's own words, we can surely accept the son's testimony as sincere and accurate. Furthermore, what possible reason would there be for the son to misrepresent the facts? On the other hand, it could be that Philo Dibble's memory regarding the authorship of the hymn was faulty when he spoke to his son; after all, the hymn was published in 1833, sixty-two years before Philo's death in 1895, and seventy years before the son's statement.³² The fact that Williams penned all five

He moved to Zion, Jackson County, Missouri in 1832, was seriously wounded in the mob attack of November 4, 1833, but was miraculously healed when he received a blessing at the hands of Newell Knight. *History of the Church*, 1:431 n. On August 21, 1834, when Dibble was twenty-eight years old, he was ordained a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood by Thomas B. Marsh. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 95–96. He received medical services from Dr. Frederick G. Williams on thirteen occasions during 1839 and 1840, while living in Illinois. The bill of \$11.69 was paid in full on October 11, 1840. Dr. F. G. Williams medical ledger, 8, Church History Library.

31. Ron Watt, email message to author, February 22, 2007. Statement found among the fourteen written responses to the *Deseret News* appears in a folder entitled “Hymns 1903” at the Church History Library. Philo Dibble Jr., the fourth child of Philo Dibble Sr., was born October 17, 1835, in Clay County, Missouri, and died December 7, 1915, at age eighty, twelve years after making this statement.

A letter containing a similar statement is found in the same file from Edwin C. Dibble (a grandson) addressed to the Church Historian dated April 22, 1903.

32. It may be that Philo Dibble wrote a poem with a similar first line or title, which he or his son confused with “The happy day has rolled on.” Hymn titles with similar words (which appeared in the early LDS hymnals of 1835, 1838, 1839, 1840, and 1843) whose authors are still unknown, according to Helen H. Macaré,

Songs as a unit soon after a spiritual manifestation he had recorded as “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” in the Kirtland Revelation book on February 27, 1833, is likewise compelling evidence of Williams’s authorship. Also significant is the fact that the five songs were found as a unit among the papers of Emma Smith, the compiler of the 1835 hymnal.

Song 3, “The great and glorious gospel light,” never attributed until now.³³

Song 4, “My soul is full of peace and love,” never attributed until now.

Song 5, “Ere long the veil will rend in twain,” attributed to P. P. Pratt in 1863. The listing of Parley P. Pratt as the author of Song 5, “Ere long the veil will rend in twain,” as noted above, first appeared in 1863 in the 12th edition of *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, six years after Pratt’s death. While he lived, however, Pratt never included the song among his own compositions. The first edition of Pratt’s collected works is titled *The Millennium, A Poem, to Which Is Added Hymns and Songs* and was published by Parley P. Pratt in Boston in 1835. The hymn in question is not found among the seventeen poems that make up the volume. Of course Song 5 was published in May of 1833 in the *Star*; if Pratt had in fact written it, he probably would have included it in his collected works in 1835. Pratt’s second edition of his collected poems is titled *The Millennium, and Other Poems* and was published in 1840.³⁴ Song 5, “Ere long the veil will rend in twain,” is likewise not found among the poems and one essay that make up that volume. Since Song 5 had by then been published in the 1833 *Star*, the 1835 LDS hymnal, and the 1836 *Messenger and Advocate*, and had been sung at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, it is not likely that Parley P. Pratt would have purposely left out this beloved poem from his second

include “The glorious day is rolling on,” “Happy souls that free from harms,” and “Zion, my holy happy home.” See Macaré, “Singing Saints,” addendum.

33. Mack Wilberg, now director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, composed music for this hymn and three others published in the 1835 LDS hymnal. The piece was performed at the Joseph Smith Bicentennial Concert held on November 18, 2005, at Brigham Young University. Wilberg wrote in the program notes: “Then it just hit me that there were lots of great texts that are no longer known or used in the Church but yet have a valuable message, particularly concerning the Restoration. So what I have written are completely new musical settings of old texts. . . . The last movement is entitled ‘The Great and Glorious Gospel Light.’ It has a little nobility about it and I hope brings the piece to a close.” Transcription of Mack Wilberg’s Introduction, in author’s possession.

34. Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennium and Other Poems: To Which Is Annexed “A Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter”* (New York: W. Molineaux, 1840).

edition of collected hymns, unless, of course, the hymn had not been written by him in the first place.

In the 1913 edition of Parley P. Pratt's collected works, *The Millennial Hymns of Parley Parker Pratt*,³⁵ which contained fifty hymns, hymn no. 17 of the collection is "Ere long the veil will rend in twain," and at the bottom of stanza 9, the last stanza, appears "Parley Parker Pratt, 1840." Where did 1840 come from? The answer perhaps is found in the first edition of *A Collection of Sacred Hymns*, compiled by Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor in Manchester, England in 1840. That hymnal contained a total of 271 hymns, including the four songs by President Williams, but there are no attributions for the texts. Hymn no. 12 is "Ere long the veil will rend in twain." In Parley P. Pratt's autobiography, he states that the 1840 hymnal contains "nearly fifty of my original hymns and songs, composed expressly for the book, and most of them written during the press of duties which then crowded upon me."³⁶

The Enoch Revelations

One of the most significant doctrinal and historical contributions made by Joseph Smith is the restored knowledge of the life and ministry of the prophet Enoch.³⁷ Beginning in June 1830, Joseph Smith received a series of revelations (now part of the Book of Moses found in the Pearl of Great Price) on the creation of the earth and the first generations of man. From November 1830 to February 1831, the revelations focused on Enoch: Moses 6:21–68, Moses 7:1–69; and Moses 8:1–2. Through his great faith, Enoch received a vision of the history of the world that gives us insights into the plan of salvation, the Fall of Adam, the central role of Christ in the redemption of mankind, and the events leading up to the Lord's triumphant Second Coming. We also learn that Enoch, although faced with

35. Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennial Hymns of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. and comp. Samuel Russell (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913).

36. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, revised and enhanced edition, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 373. The passage is found in chapter 37, April 15, 1840–July 1840.

37. The Bible references to Enoch are scanty: Genesis 5:18–24; Luke 3:37; Hebrews 11:5; and Jude 1:14. These verses mention Enoch's translation but do not detail his ministry, teachings, and prophecies, or of the establishment of the city of Zion and of his vision of the history of the world. It is interesting to point out that there are at least three apocalyptic books of Enoch; "these are included in the category usually called 'pseudepigrapha,' meaning writings under assumed names, compiled long after the time of the supposed author. On the basis of latter-day revelation it appears there are some truths contained in the apocalyptic Enoch books." Bible Dictionary, "Enoch," 665.

great opposition and wickedness in his day, was successful in converting many souls to the gospel. He founded a city called “City of Holiness, even Zion” (Moses 7:19), which, in the process of time, was taken up into heaven (Moses 7:21). The Lord promised, however, that the city of Enoch would return to the earth at the Lord’s Second Coming (Moses 7:63–64). We also learn that on that joyous occasion the heavenly hosts will join in song with the earth’s inhabitants when Zion is again restored to the earth to usher in Christ’s millennial reign (Moses 7:53, 63).

In addition to the revelation on Enoch found in the Book of Moses cited above, Joseph Smith received other revelations, now in the Doctrine and Covenants, that referenced Enoch.³⁸ Joseph Smith also received new information on Enoch when translating Genesis 9:21–23, which was recorded between March 8 and April 5, 1831.³⁹ The Lord, addressing Noah after the flood, speaks of the covenant he had made with his great-grandfather, Enoch:

And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself.

And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy;

And the general assembly of the church of the first-born shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant which I made with thy father Enoch.⁴⁰

It is safe to assume that the newly revealed information on Enoch and his prophecies regarding the return of the city of Zion to the earth excited the imagination of the early members of the Church. W. W. Phelps, editor of the Church’s monthly newspaper *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Missouri, aided in keeping the subject uppermost in their minds

38. See Doctrine and Covenants 38:4; 45:11–14; 76:57, 67, 100; 84:15–16; 107:48–49, 53, 57; 133:54.

39. Information taken from Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 58.

40. The Holy Scriptures Containing the Old and New Testaments: An Inspired Revision of the Authorized Version, by Joseph Smith, Junior (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Tenth Printing, September 1964), 32.

by publishing excerpts of the Enoch revelations and by referencing them in his editorials. Between June 1832 and July 1833, Phelps published nine revelations about Enoch, mentioned the ancient prophet fourteen times in editorials, and printed six hymns that referred to Enoch. From the *Star* we see that the very first hymns composed and published in this dispensation on Enoch's visions, prophecies, and the return of the city of Zion to the earth were the five written by Frederick G. Williams.

Internal Evidence: The Texts Compared

It is an important fact that Frederick G. Williams would decide to turn his spiritual experience of singing in tongues into hymn texts. Usually these experiences were shared privately among groups of devout Saints, but Williams obviously wanted everyone to sing what he sang. So he did what so many of the early Church leaders did—he wrote hymn texts. He made sure that his singing in tongues was not only interpreted and recorded, but was versified and printed.

One intriguing aspect of this topic, for which there are no ready answers, is the subject of the gift of tongues.⁴¹ Speaking and singing in tongues, together with the translations thereof, were well known among the early members of the Church.⁴² The Kirtland Council Minute Book, for instance, contains the following entry for January 22, 1833, concerning one of the earliest manifestations of this gift, after the Church was restored.

After prayer the president [Joseph Smith] spake in an unknown tongue. He was followed by Br. Zebedee Coltrin and he by Bro William Smith. After this the gift was poured out in a miraculous manner until all the Elders obtained the gift together with several of the members of the Church both male & female. Great and glorious were the divine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Praises were sang to God & the Lamb besides much speaking & praying, all in tongues.⁴³

41. One of the important gifts of the Spirit since New Testament times, speaking in tongues is often referred to as “glossalalia” from the Greek word for tongue.

42. Besides the entry on “Gifts of the Spirit” by H. George Bickerstaff found in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 2:544–46; see also Dan Vogel and Scott C. Dunn, “‘The Tongue of Angels’: Glossolalia among Mormonism’s Founders,” *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 2 (1993): 1–34. Another study about spiritual gifts that is geographically and gender specific is Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, “Sweet Counsel and Seas of Tribulation: The Religious Life of the Women in Kirtland,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (1980): 151–62.

43. Collier and Harwell, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 6. See also *History of the Church*, 1:323. Frederick G. Williams was the assistant scribe for this

Because President Williams was present at the meeting where the gift of tongues was manifested, he too probably experienced the gift. A month later, on February 27, 1833, we find Frederick G. Williams⁴⁴ again receiving the gift of tongues, this time as a song or hymn, together with its translation. He subsequently rendered the whole into verse form, a first in Mormon hymnody. Since there are no records to guide us, we can only speculate about the procedure, somewhat akin to the Book of Mormon translation by the gift and power of God. The complete text is in table 1.

The above text can be analyzed as containing a preamble (verses 1–2), followed by four sections: Enoch’s vision, from the beginning until the restoration just prior to Christ’s return (verses 3–8); Frederick G. Williams’s personal testimony of the gospel (verses 9–11); the restoration of the gospel with an admonition to repent and prepare for the Bridegroom (verses 12–14); the final scene: the coming of Christ, the City of Enoch, and the Saints’ celestial reward (verses 15–17). This same progression is found sequentially in the five “Songs of Zion,” to wit:

Song 1: Age after age has rolled away

Section 1: Enoch’s vision, from the beginning until just prior to Christ’s return

Song 2: The happy day has rolled on

Section 1: Enoch’s vision continued; the restoration by angels

Song 3: The great and glorious gospel light

Section 2: Williams’s personal testimony of the gospel he has accepted

Song 4: My soul is full of peace and love

Section 2: Williams’s personal testimony of the gospel

conference, which continued the next day, January 23, 1833, with more manifestations of the gift of tongues and other spiritual manifestations. “At the close of which scene Br F G. Williams being moved upon by the Holy Ghost, washed the feet of the president [Joseph Smith] as a token of his fixed determination to be with him in suffering or in rejoicing, in life or in death and to be continually on his right hand, in which thing he was accepted.” See Collier and Harwell, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 5–6. See also *History of the Church* 1:323.

44. It may be useful to note that Philo Dibble, Parley P. Pratt, William W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, John Whitmer, and many others, were a thousand miles away in Missouri at the time of the Kirtland “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” episode of February 27, 1833. See entry of February 26, 1833, in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 60; and Pratt, *Autobiography*, 99–101. See also Philo Dibble, 1806–1895. *Autobiography* (1806–c. 1843), “Early Scenes in Church History,” in *Four Faith Promoting Classics* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 74–96; also accessible online at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/PDibble.html>.

Table 1

Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated,
February 27, 1833, Kirtland Revelation Book, 48–49

1. Age after age has rolled away, according to the sad fate of man—countless millions forever gone.
2. At length the period of time has come that oft was seen by a prophetic eye and written, too, by all holy men inspired of the Lord, a time which was seen by Enoch of Old,
3. At a time when he stood upon the mount which was called the Mountain of God as he gazed upon nature and the corruption of man, and mourned their sad fate and wept and cried with a loud voice, and heaved forth his sighs, "Omnipotence, Omnipotence! O, may I see thee!"
4. And with his finger he touched his eyes and he saw heaven, he gazed on eternity and sang an angelic song and mingled his voice with the heavenly throng, "Hosanna! Hosanna! The sound of the trump!" around the throne of God echoed and echoed again, and rang and reechoed until eternity was filled with his voice.
5. He saw, yea, he saw and he glorified God, the salvation of his people, his city caught up through the gospel of Christ.
6. He saw the beginning, the ending of men; he saw the time when Adam his father was made, and he saw that he was in eternity before a grain of dust in the balance was weighed.
7. He saw that he emanated and came down from God. He saw what had passed and then was and is present and to come.
8. Therefore, he saw the last days, the Angel that came down to John, and the angel that is now flying, having the everlasting gospel to commit unto men—
9. Which in my soul I have received, and from death and bondage from the Devil I'm freed, and am free in the gospel of Christ.
10. And I'm waiting, and with patience I'll wait on the Lord. Hosanna! Loud sound the trump! Come Eternity, to ring Hosanna forever.
11. I'm waiting the coming of Christ, a mansion on high, a celestial abode, a seat on the right hand of God.
12. Angels are coming, the Holy Ghost is falling upon the saints and will continue to fall.
13. The Saviour is coming—yea, the Bridegroom—prepare ye, prepare! Yea the cry has gone forth, "go, wait on the Lord!"
14. The Angels in glory will soon be descending to join you in singing the praises of God. The trump loud shall sound—the dark veil soon shall rend—heaven shall shake, the earth shall tremble, and all nature shall feel the power of God.
15. Gaze ye saints, gaze ye upon him—gaze upon Jesus—Hosanna!—loud sound the trump!—His Church is caught up!
16. Hosanna! Praise Him ye saints. They stand at His feet—behold they are weeping—they strike hands with Enoch of Old.
17. They inherit a city as it is written, the City of God. Loud sound the trump! They receive a Celestial crown. Hosanna! Hosanna! The Heaven of Heavens! And the heavens are filled with the praises of God. Amen.⁴⁵

Section 3: Admonition to the Saints to prepare for the Bridegroom.

Williams personalizes the injunction, applying it to himself.

Song 5: Ere long the veil shall rend in twain

Section 4: The final scene: the coming of Christ, the city of Enoch, and the Saints' celestial reward.

45. Transcribed and arranged into verses by Fred C. Collier, *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 1981), 1:62–63.

“Songs of Zion” Compared with “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated”

A close comparative reading of the two texts (see table 2) discloses the similarities in the order and progression of the ideas, as well as in the choices of the phrases and words used. The limit imposed by the number of feet he could use in each verse (four feet of iambic tetrameter), plus the need for an end rhyme (*aabb*), necessarily affected and changed the word selection Williams used. Nevertheless, some are exact duplicates. The number in parentheses in the right column refers to the verse in which the phrase appears.

New Details Added to the Enoch Vision

President Williams’s 1833 spiritual experience “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated,” which he recorded in the Kirtland Revelation Book, adds several details to the Enoch story not found elsewhere. To begin with, the narrator (who, in this case, may be considered the Spirit of the Lord) announces that, whereas all the holy prophets, not just Enoch, beheld in vision the time leading up to the Second Coming of the Lord (and wrote about it), that glorious period has now come; the time foretold has arrived (table 1, verse 2).

Among other insights, we learn from “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” that Enoch was not simply given the privilege of seeing God (compare with Moses 7:3–4). Rather, the glorious opportunity to see God came to Enoch because he asked to see God (table 1, verse 3).

We learn further that Enoch’s ability to see the Divine was conveyed when God touched Enoch’s eyes with his finger (table 1, verse 4). The ambiguity present in the pronoun “he” is avoided in the hymn version by naming God as the initiator of the action. “With finger end God touch’d his eyes.”⁴⁶

The name of the mountain where Enoch saw the Lord and beheld the vision of eternity is called “the mount Simeon” in the Pearl of Great Price (Moses 7:2). In “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” we learn that it was also referred to as the Mountain of God (table 1, verse 3).

When the vision of eternity is unfolded to Enoch in the Pearl of Great Price, the Lord tells Enoch “Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations” (Moses 7:4). In that vision, Enoch is shown “all the nations of the earth” (Moses 7:23) and, beginning with his own,

46. In a previous encounter with God, Enoch was told “Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see” (Moses 6:35).

Table 2

Song 1: Age after age has rolled away	Kirtland Revelation Book, pages 48–49
1. Age after age has roll'd away, Since man first dwelt in mortal clay; And countless millions slept in death, That once supplied a place on earth:	Age after age has rolled away (1) countless millions forever gone (1)
2. According to the fate of man, Which God had fix'd in his own plan, So age must come, and age must go Till work complete is here below:	according to the sad fate of man (1)
3. Which had been seen by saints of old, And by the prophets were foretold; Which wondrous things are drawing near: That Enoch saw, and saints did cheer.	that oft was seen by a prophetic eye (2) a time which was seen by Enoch of Old (2)
4. Enoch who did converse with God: Stood on the mount and stretch'd abroad His soul wide as eternity: He rent the vail and wonders see.	[Enoch] stood upon the mount (3)
5. With mighty faith he did expand O'er earth and heaven, o'er sea and land, Till things above and things below He did behold; yea, did them know.	he saw heaven, he gazed on eternity (4)
6. His heart he tun'd to notes above, His soul o'erwhelm'd with boundless love, He sang a song in heav'nly lays, While angels' tongues join'd him in praise.	and sang an angelic song (4) mingled his voice with the heavenly throng (4)
7. With finger end God touch'd his eyes, That he might gaze within the skies; His voice he rais'd to God on high, Who heard his groans and drew him nigh.	And with his finger he touched his eyes (4) he gazed on eternity (4)
8. With joy and wonder, all amaz'd, Amid the heav'nly throng, he gaz'd! While heav'nly music charm'd his ear, And angels' notes, remov'd all fear.	with the heavenly throng (4)
9. Hosanna, he aloud did cry, To God who dwells above the sky: Again, Hosanna did resound, Among the heav'nly hosts around.	
10. His voice he raised in higher strains; Echoed and reechoed again Till heaven and earth his voice did hear: Eternity did record bear.	echoed and echoed again (4) until eternity was filled with his voice (4)
11. The trump of God around the throne Proclaim'd the power of God anon, And sounded loud what should take place, From age to age, from race to race.	"The sound of the trump!" around the throne of God (4)
12. Among the heavenly hosts he sang God's scheme of life for sinful man, And for the gospel's saving grace, He prais'd the Father face to face.	the salvation of his people (5) He saw, yea, he saw and he glorified God (5)

13. The end of all his labors here, Were all unfolded to him there: His city rais'd to dwell on high, With all the saints above the sky.	his city caught up through the gospel of Christ (5)
14. He saw before him all things past, From end to end, from first to last; Yea, things before the world began, Or dust was fashion'd into man.	He saw what had passed and then was (7) He saw the beginning, the ending of men (6)
15. The place of Adam's first abode While in the presence of his God, Before the mountains raised their heads, Or the small dust of balance weigh'd.	the time when Adam his father was made (6) before a grain of dust in the balance was weigh'd (6)
16. With God he saw his race began, And from him emanated man, And with him did in glory dwell, Before there was an earth or hell.	he emanated and came down from God (7)
17. From age to age, whate'er took place, Was present then before his face; And to the latest years of man, Was plain before him, heav'ns' plan.	He saw what had passed and then was (7) and is present and to come (7) Therefore, he saw the last days (8)
18. His eyes with wonder did behold, Eternal glories yet untold; And glorious things of latter time, Which angels have to tell to men.	the angel that is now flying (8) gospel to commit unto men (8)
19. He then did hear, in days of old, The message that to John was told; The angel which the news did bring, He heard him talk and heard him sing.	the Angel that came down to John (8)
20. And knew before the days of John, What glories were on him to dawn, The message which he did receive, He heard and saw, and did believe.	
21. He knew full well what John should hear, Concerning times and latter years, When God again should set his hand, To gather Israel to their lands.	
22. The gospel then from darkest shades, Should rise and go with rapid strides, Till nations distant, far and near, The glorious proclamation hear.	
23. The angel that this news proclaims, Should come and visit earth again, Commit the gospel, long since lost, To man, with power, as at the first.	

Song 2: The happy day has rolled on

Kirtland Revelation Book, pages 48–49

1. The happy day has rolled on, The glorious period now has come: The angel sure has come again To introduce Messiah's reign.	At length the period of time has come (2) the angel that is now flying (8)
2. The gospel trump again is heard, The truth from darkness has appear'd; The lands which long in darkness lay, Have now beheld a glorious day.	Loud sound the trump (17)
3. The day by prophets long foretold; The day which Abra'm did behold; The day that saints desired long, When God his strange work would perform.	that oft was seen by a prophetic eye (2) by all holy men inspired of the Lord (2)
4. The day when saints again should hear The voice of Jesus in their ear, And angels who above do reign, Come down to converse hold with men.	Angels are coming, the Holy Ghost is falling (12) upon the saints and will continue to fall (12)

Song 3: The great and glorious gospel light

Kirtland Revelation Book, pages 48–49

1. The great and glorious gospel light, Has usher'd forth into my sight, Which in my soul I have receiv'd, From death and bondage being freed.	Which in my soul I have received (9) from death and bondage from the Devil I'm freed (9)
2. With saints below and saints above I'll join to praise the God I love; Like Enoch too, I will proclaim, A loud Hosanna to his name.	Hosanna! Praise Him ye saints (16) they strike hands with Enoch of Old (16) Hosanna! Loud sound the trump (10)
3. Hosanna, let the echo fly From pole to pole, from sky to sky, And saints and angels, join to sing, Till all eternity shall ring.	Hosanna! The sound of the trump . . . echoed (4) The Angels in glory will . . . join you in singing (14) Eternity to ring Hosanna forever (10)
4. Hosanna, let the voice extend, Till time shall cease, and have an end; Till all the throngs of heav'n above, Shall join the saints in songs of love.	with the heavenly throng, "Hosanna!" (4) and sang an angelic song and mingled his voice (4)
5. Hosanna, let the trump of God, Proclaim his wonders far abroad, And earth, and air, and skies, and seas, Conspire to sound aloud his praise.	Hosanna! The sound of the trump . . . of God (4) And the heavens are filled (17) with the praises of God (17)

Song 4: My soul is full of peace and love

Kirtland Revelation Book, pages 48–49

1. My soul is full of peace and love, I soon shall see Christ from above; And angels too, the hallow'd throng, Shall join with me in holy song.	The Angels in glory will soon be descending (14) to join you in singing the praises of God (14)
2. The Spirit's power has sealed my peace, And fill'd my soul with heav'nly grace; Transported I, with peace and love, Am waiting for the throngs above.	Which in my soul I have received (9) I'm waiting the coming of Christ, a mansion (11)
3. Prepare my heart, prepare my tongue, To join this glorious, heav'nly throng: To hail the Bridegroom from above, And join the band in songs of love.	prepare ye, prepare! (13) his voice with the heavenly throng (4) The Saviour is coming—yea, the Bridegroom (13)
4. Let all my pow'rs of mind combine To hail my Savior all divine; To hear his voice, attend his call, And crown him King, and Lord of all.	Hosanna! Praise Him ye saints (16)

Song 5: Ere long the veil will rend in twain

Kirtland Revelation Book, pages 48–49

1. Ere long the veil will rend in twain, The King descend with all his train; The earth shall shake with awful fright, And all creation feel his might.	the dark veil soon shall rend (14) heaven shall shake, the earth shall tremble (14) and all nature shall feel the power of God (14)
2. The trump of God, it long shall sound, And raise the nations under ground; Throughout the vast domains of heav'n The voice echoes, the sound is given.	The trump loud shall sound (14)
3. Lift up your heads ye saints in peace, The Savior comes for your release; The day of the redeem'd has come, The saints shall all be welcom'd home.	The Saviour is coming (13)
4. Behold the church, it soars on high, To meet the saints amid the sky; To hail the King in clouds of fire, And strike and tune th' immortal lyre.	His Church is caught up (15)
5. Hosanna now the trump shall sound, Proclaim the joys of heav'n around, When all the saints together join, In songs of love, and all divine.	Hosanna! The sound of the trump (4)
6. With Enoch here we all shall meet, And worship at Messiah's feet, Unite our hands and hearts in love, And reign on thrones with Christ above.	they strike hands with Enoch (16) They stand at His [Messiah's] feet (16)
7. The city that was seen of old Whose walls were jasper, and streets gold, We'll now inherit thron'd in might: The Father and the Son's delight.	a city as it is written (17) They inherit (17)
8. Celestial crowns we shall receive, And glories great our God shall give, While loud hosannas we'll proclaim, And sound aloud our Savior's name.	They receive a Celestial crown (17)
9. Our hearts and tongues all join'd in one, A loud hosanna to proclaim, While all the heav'ns shall shout again, And all creation say, Amen.	Hosanna! Hosanna! (17) The Heaven of Heavens (17) are filled with the praise of God. Amen. (17)

“generation upon generation” (Moses 7:24) until the Second Coming of the Lord. In “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated,” we learn that Enoch’s vision began even earlier, with the creation of Adam and his premortal estate in eternity. We also learn that he (and all men)⁴⁷ came down from God (table 1, verses 6–7).

In the hymn version, Williams expands on the premortal existence of man and his relationship to God.

[He saw] The place of Adam’s first abode
While in the presence of his God,
Before the mountains rais’d their heads,
Or the small dust of balance weighed.
With God he saw his race began,
And from him emanated man,
And with him did in glory dwell,
Before there was an earth or hell.
(Song 1, stanzas 15 and 16)

In “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated,” we learn that Enoch saw the angel of the latter days (table 1, verse 8) whom John the Revelator describes thus: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth” (Revelation 14:6).

In the Pearl of Great Price, “the Lord showed Enoch all things, even unto the end of the world; and he saw the day of the righteous, the hour of their redemption, and received a fulness of joy” (Moses 7:67). In “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated,” more details are added concerning the hour of redemption and fulness of joy. The faithful Saints strike hands with Enoch, receive a celestial crown, inherit the city of God, and shout praises to the Lord when he appears (table 1, verses 15–17).

Some Final Considerations

Could Frederick G. Williams have simply penned five favorite hymns not of his own composing? There are several circumstances that militate against this thesis, several of which have already been discussed, such as the sequential nature of the ideas expressed in both the “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” and the “Songs of Zion.” In addition, these are not Protestant hymns; these are Restoration songs that rely heavily on the revelation of Enoch found in the Kirtland Revelation Book and in the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. The only Restoration hymns

47. In Moses 6, Enoch speaks at length about Adam and Eve and their posterity.

at the time, 1833, were few and they were all printed in the *Star*, to which President Williams, as a member of the First Presidency, had total access, and therefore there would be no reason to pen them for his own personal use. Second, the length of the first song (23 stanzas), makes it somewhat impractical as a hymn, therefore Frederick G. Williams would not likely have copied it as a favorite hymn, unless of course it was his own, based on a gift of tongues experience.

Why did not Frederick G. Williams claim authorship of these five songs during his lifetime? Perhaps he did. But in the first place, author attribution was not included with the hymns and songs published in the *Star* or early hymnals. Second, no personal journal written by Williams has been found to date; had he kept one, he might have confided his authorship there. Third, Williams was, by nature, a taciturn man and avoided the limelight. Joseph Smith said of him, “Brother Frederick G. Williams is one of those men in whom I place the greatest confidence and trust, for I have found him ever full of love and Brotherly kindness. He is not a man of many words, but is ever winning, because of his constant mind. He shall ever have place in my heart, and is ever entitled to my confidence. He is perfectly honest and upright, and seeks with all his heart to magnify his Presidency in the Church of Christ, but fails in many instances, in consequence of a want of confidence in himself.”⁴⁸ Williams had spent much of his ministry as the scribe of the Prophet and was always in the background, never center stage. Finally, there was essentially no author attribution given to LDS hymns until 1863. The fact that Williams died in 1842, two years before the Prophet, insured that he would not participate in the serious hymn-attribution-of-authors project begun in 1903 in the *Deseret News* by the Church Historian’s Office. Mack Wilberg’s program notes (which, unknown to him, referred to one of President Williams’s hymns) give his musings on the acquaintance Joseph Smith might have had with these early hymns:

The last movement is entitled “The Great and Glorious Gospel Light.” It has a little nobility about it and I hope brings the piece to a close.

I can’t help but feel that Joseph Smith read these texts and perhaps approved them before they were printed. I don’t think it’s going too far to say that perhaps he knew some of them very well and maybe even loved them. I am pleased to honor him by bringing them forward once again.⁴⁹

The attribution of the five songs of Zion to Frederick G. Williams rests on a number of important evidentiary steps.

48. *History of the Church* 1:444. See also Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 2:12–13.

49. Transcription of Mack Wilberg’s Introduction.

1. The five songs of the manuscript are identified as being in the handwriting of and likely composed by Frederick G. Williams, and are catalogued in his name file at the LDS Archives (together with a second recently catalogued manuscript), based on the opinion of historian and handwriting expert, Dean Jessee.

2. All five songs were written as a group and numbered sequentially on two manuscript sheets in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams.

3. The two sheets containing the five songs were in the possession of Emma Smith, the compiler of the first LDS hymnal, where the four shorter songs were published. Emma Smith gave these and other documents to her second husband, Lewis Bidamon, who gave them to his son Charles Bidamon, who sold them to Wilford Wood, who gave them to the Church Historian's Office in 1937.

4. The direct inspiration for the songs is found in "Sang by the gift of Tongues and Translated," a personal experience recorded by Frederick G. Williams in the Kirtland Revelation Book on February 27, 1833. The same ideas and phrases (some word for word) are also found in the five songs.

5. All five songs were published sequentially in the *Star* from May to July of 1833.

6. The songs were not titled "Poems" or "Hymns, Selected and prepared for the Church of Christ," but "Songs of Zion," thus retaining the original title found on the five-song manuscript and in the Kirtland Revelation Book, both in Frederick G. Williams's handwriting.

7. Four of the songs were kept as a group and published sequentially as hymns, numbers 19 through 22, in the original 1835 hymnal compiled by Emma Smith.

8. The four songs that appeared in the original 1835 hymnal continued to appear in virtually all of the twenty-six hymnals or editions published in the nineteenth century, both in England and America.

9. Only in the latter half of the nineteenth century did author attribution begin to appear in any LDS hymnal, but many of those attributions were later shown to be incorrect.

10. Three of the five songs have remained unattributed throughout the twentieth century. Of the two that were attributed, one was said to be by Parley P. Pratt and the other by Philo Dibble. The Parley P. Pratt attribution is easily shown to be incorrect. The Philo Dibble attribution is apparently based on the son's statement given in 1903. However, since the five songs in the manuscript written by Frederick G. Williams remained together as a group when published in the *Star* and when published in the first LDS hymnal, it is more likely that the author of one is the author of all five.

Individually, the above ten evidentiary points are compelling. When taken together, they present a strong argument in support of Frederick G. Williams's authorship of the five "Songs of Zion."

The idea that Frederick G. Williams likely composed these five hymns is of course interesting and expands our admiration for and biographical understanding of the man. Even more important is the possibility that President Williams penned these hymns based on a gift of tongues experience that was recorded in the Kirtland Revelation Book along with other revelations. In some ways, "Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated" (if not the hymns that were adapted from it) could therefore be considered personal revelation, and perhaps was even considered an inspired writing penned while President Williams was acting in his capacity as a prophet, seer, and revelator and member of the First Presidency.⁵⁰ Both the recorded spiritual experience and the hymns themselves are important for the added details they provide, which augment our understanding of Enoch's vision and the history of the world in the last days prior to Christ millennial reign.

50. The First Presidency—made up of Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery (assistant president of the High Priesthood), Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams—formed the selection committee that chose from among the various revelations received those that should be included in the forthcoming *Doctrine and Covenants*, published in 1835. See Collier and Harwell, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, September 24, 1834, 61–63; *History of the Church*, 2:165. This one, along with others found in the Kirtland Revelation Book, was not selected and therefore was not canonized as binding scripture when the book was presented to the membership of the Church in the conference assembled.

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