

# The Revelations of James Strang

Consisting of  
The Revelations Given of God  
Through the Prophet James J. Strang  
From 1844 to 1849

Together with Other Important Records,

Including

The Letter of Appointment from Joseph Smith,  
Appointing James J. Strang as His Successor,  
And Appointing Voree as a Stake of Zion.  
Edited by Christopher Matt

Judge the true successor according to Law and fruits:

Of all the claimants who stood up to lead the church in the wake of Joseph and Hyrum's martyrdom, James J. Stang is the only one who claimed to lead by the appointment of Joseph Smith, Jun. as prophesied:

But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead. (1835 D&C 14:2/ULDS D&C 43:4/RLDS D&C 43:2a)

Nevertheless, through you shall the aoracles be given to another, yea, even unto the church (See 1835 D&C 84:2/ULDS D&C 90:4/RLDS D&C 87:2a).

He was the only one to produce the evidence as a prophet, seer, revelator and translator:

And again, the duty of the president of the office of the high priesthood is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses. Behold, here is wisdom - Yeah, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator and a prophet - having all the gifts of God which He bestows upon the head of the church (1835 D&C 3:42/ULDS D&C 107:91-92/RLDS D&C 104:42a-b).

And Ordained in the same manner as Joseph, by Peter James and John

And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and special witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them (1835 D&C 50:3/ULDS D&C 27:12/RLDS D&C 26:3a).

See Note: "Ordination By Angels" in Chapter 18 of the Book of the Law of the Lord.

Though not required in the Law of God, James's two translations each were attested to by signed witnesses as was the Book of Mormon, also totalling eleven (4

for the Voree Plates, 7 for the Plates of Laban), who likewise maintained their testimonies until their deaths. These witnesses stand beside Joseph's eleven for an even greater witness of the Restoration.

Revelations included in the Book of the Law of the Lord are omitted from this edition, including:

The True Decalog . . . . .	BoL ch 1
The True God . . . . .	BoL ch 2
Establishment of the Law. . . . .	BoL ch
Feasts. . . . .	BoL ch
Inheritances . . . . .	BoL ch
Calling of a King . . . . .	BoL ch

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## SECTION 1

*The Letter of Appointment, from the Prophet Joseph Smith, appointing James Strang by Revelation as his successor, and appointing Voree as a stake of Zion. Written from Nauvoo, June 18th, 1844, nine days prior to his Martyrdom.*

1 My Dear Son: Your epistle of May 24th, proposing the planting a stake of Zion in Wisconsin and the gathering of the saints there, was duly received, and I with most of the brethren whose advice I called in were of opinion that you was deceived by a spirit not of this world, great but not good.

2a Brother Hyrum however thought otherwise and favored the project, not doubting it was of God. I however determined to return you an unfavorable answer for the present.

2b But oh the littleness of man in his best earthly state. Not so the will of the Almighty. God hath ruled it otherwise, and a message from the throne of grace directed me as it hath inspired you,

2c And the faith which thou hast in the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, hath been repaid to thee a thousand fold, and thou shalt be like unto him; but the flock shall find rest with thee, and God shall reveal to thee his will concerning them.

3a I have long felt that my present work was almost done and that I should soon be called to rule a mighty host, but something whispers me it will be in the land of spirits where the wicked cease from troubling and the bands of the prisoner fall off.

3b My heart yearns for my little ones, but I know God will be a father to them, and I can claim face to face the fulfillment of promises from him who is a covenant keeping God and who sweareth and performeth and faileth not to the uttermost.

4 The wolves are upon the scent, and I am waiting to be offered up, if such be the will of God, knowing that though my visage be more marred than that of any, it will be unscarred and fair when archangels shall place on my brow the double crown of martyr and king in a heavenly world.

5 In the midst of darkness and boding danger the spirit of Elijah came upon me, and I went away to inquire of God how the Church should be saved.

6a I was upon the hill of the temple. The calm father of waters rolled below, changeless and eternal.

6b I beheld a light in the heavens above, and streams of bright light illuminated the firmament, varied and beautiful as the rainbow, gentle yet rapid as the fierce lightning.

7a The Almighty came from his throne of rest. He clothed himself with light as with a garment. He appeared, and moon and stars went out. The earth dissolved in space.

7b I trod on air and was borne on wings of Cherubims. The sweetest strains of heavenly music thrilled in my ear, but the notes were low and sad as though they sounded the requiem of martyred prophets.

8a I bowed my head to the earth and asked only wisdom and strength for the church. The voice of God answered,

8b My servant Joseph, thou hast been faithful over many things and thy reward is glorious, the crown and scepter are thine and they wait thee.

8c But thou hast sinned in some things and thy punishment is very bitter. The whirlwind goeth before and its clouds are dark, but rest followeth and to its days there shall be no end.

8d Study the words of the vision for it tarrieth not.

9a And now behold, my servant James J. Strang hath come to thee from far for truth when he knew it not and hath not rejected it but had faith in thee, the Shepherd and Stone of Israel;

9b And to him shall the gathering of the people be, for he shall plant a stake of Zion in Wisconsin; and I will establish it, and there shall my people have peace and rest, and shall not be moved,

9c For it shall be established on the prairie on White River in the lands of Racine and Walworth; and behold, my servants James and Aaron shall plant it, for I have given them wisdom;

9c And Daniel shall stand in his lot on the hill beside the river looking down on the prairie and shall instruct my people and plead with them face to face.

10 Behold, my servant James shall lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of Zion; and my servant Aaron shall be his counsellor, for he hath wisdom in the gospel and understandeth the doctrines and erreth not therein.

11a And I will have a house built unto me there of stone, and there will I show myself to my people by many mighty works,

11b And the name of the city shall be called Voree, which is, being interpreted, Garden of Peace, for there shall my people have peace and rest and wax fat and pleasant in the presence of their enemies.

12a But I will again stretch out my arm over the river of waters, and on the banks thereof shall the house of my choice be.

12b But now the city of Voree shall be a stronghold of safety to my people, and they that are faithful and obey me I will there give them great prosperity, and such as they have not had before,

12c And unto Voree shall be the gathering of my people, and there shall the oppressed flee for safety and none shall hurt or molest them.

13a And by this shall they know that I have spoken it: the people there and the owners of the land shall show kindness to them,

13b For great calamities are coming on the church, and such as have not been; and if they scatter, the ungodly of the world shall swallow them up;

13c But if they gather to my city of Voree, there will I keep them under the shadow of my wing,

13d And the cities from whence my people have been driven shall be purged with a high hand, for I will do it, and my people shall be again restored to their possessions;

13e But dark clouds are gathering, for the church is not yet wholly purged.

14a And now I command my servants, the Apostles and Priests and Elders of the Church of the Saints, that they communicate and proclaim this my word to all the saints of God in all the world,

14b That they may be gathered unto and round about the city of Voree and be saved from their enemies, for I will have a people to serve me.

15a And I command my servant Moses Smith, that he go unto the saints with whom he is acquainted and unto many people, and command them in my name to go unto my city of Voree and gain inheritance therein;

15b And he shall have an inheritance therein, for he hath left all for my sake, and I will add to him many fold if he is faithful; for he knows the land and can testify to them that it is very good.

16a So spake the Almighty God of heaven. Thy duty is made plain; and if thou lackest wisdom, ask of God in whose hands I trust thee, and he will give thee unsparingly;



16b For if evil befall me, thou shalt lead the flock to pleasant pastures. God sustain thee, JOSEPH SMITH.

16c P.S. Write me soon and keep me advised of your progress from time to time.

## SECTION 2

*History of the James's baptism and ordination by the Smith brothers, blessings that foretell his calling, and the details of the Letter of Appointment.*

1a And now it appears that this letter was written on this wise:

1b In February, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-four, James J. Strang, in company with Aaron Smith and under his teaching, visited Nauvoo, the city of the saints, and there was more fully instructed by Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Sidney Rigdon in the gospel.

2a On the twenty-fifth day of February, in that year, he was baptized by Joseph Smith, who gave him the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and blessed him with many and great blessings, and said,

2b I seal upon thy head, against God's own good time, the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood,

2c And afterwards, but in the same ordinance, Thou shalt hold the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, shalt walk with Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, and shalt talk with God face to face.

3a And on the third day of March, in the same year, he was ordained an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by the laying on of hands of Hyrum Smith, according to the testimony of the Spirit of prophecy and the word of the Holy Ghost, and he said,

3b I perceive, by the Spirit which is within me, that thou shalt carry the gospel with the Spirit like flaming fire to many nations, and by thee shall God save the pure of his people.

4a At this time much was said of the necessities of the saints, for want of a suitable country for settlement where they could avoid persecution and continual molestation,

4b And the prophet Joseph asked counsel of James J. Strang, who was greatly learned in geography in regard to many countries, especially California, New Mexico, and Oregon.

4c And he advised an exploration of those countries for determining what facilities for settlement they offered, and gave much information in regard to them, both for the guidance of the explorers and to determine what parts were worth exploration.

5a He also advised a settlement of the saints to be formed immediately on White River in Wisconsin, to consist of mechanics and artisans from the northern and eastern states and provinces of America and from Europe,

5b Because the climate of Nauvoo is unfavorable to the health of such, and the place does not furnish business wherewith to employ them;

5c Both which difficulties would be entirely obviated by such an arrangement, and many other advantages would be gained in peaceable, law-abiding neighbors, cheapness of access, and facility of building.

6 The exploration of the Nebraska country, New Mexico, and upper California was immediately determined on, and arrangements commenced for sending out twenty-five explorers during the following summer.

7a It was enjoined upon James J. Strang by Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Sidney Rigdon to return to Wisconsin and make more full examinations of the country with direct reference to the advantages it might offer to the saints,

7b And to write to Joseph the results of that examination, upon which he would determine, by the best light that God should give him, what ought to be done.

8a Aaron Smith concurred with James J. Strang in recommending a gathering in Wisconsin, and counselled the selection of the country on White River as the place for planting a stake of Zion;

8b And it was agreed by all that the thing should be looked upon with favor and prosecuted with vigor to a final result.

9a On the twenty-fourth day of May, eighteen hundred and forty-four, James J. Strang, having completed his examinations and inquiries, wrote the result in a letter to Joseph Smith, to which Aaron Smith a few days after added a note concurring therein and attesting the facts therein stated.

10a This letter contained a minute statement of the advantages for the settlement of the saints which the southeastern section of Wisconsin offered, more especially for the building of a town on White River, immediately west of Burlington.

10b It was put in the post office at Burlington, directed to Joseph Smith at Nauvoo, about the last of May, by Aaron Smith.

11a Moreover, the preceding letter is in answer thereto, and was mailed at Nauvoo on the nineteenth day of June, which plainly appears by the postmark thereon,

11b And directed to James J. Strang at Burlington, in Wisconsin, at which place it arrived by mail at the time before stated, and was taken from the post office on the same day by Caleb P. Barnes, an attorney-at-law,

11c And by him delivered to James J. Strang in the presence of Aaron Smith, who immediately sat down together and opened and read the letter.

### SECTION 3

#### Delivery of the Letter of Appointment

1a This letter was received at Burlington by regular course of mail, coming through the distributing office at Chicago, and bears the Nauvoo post-mark of June 19, the day following its date.

1b It arrived at Burlington July 9th, and was immediately taken from the office by C. P. Barnes, Esq., a distinguished lawyer at that place,

1c who, in consequence of the rumors of persecution and civil war against the Mormons, and a general anxiety to hear the latest news, immediately carried it to Mr. Strang, with the request to be informed of any news of public interest which it might contain. It therefore became public the same evening.

2a As much pains have been taken to belie this document and to derogate from its authority, it is proper to add that from the day of its reception to this (April, 1848), it has always been kept open to public inspection,

2b And not an iota of evidence has yet been produced derogatory to its authenticity.

2c The Brighamites and other apostates have reported far and near that it had a black postmark, and that such were not used in the office at Nauvoo. This report is a falsehood. The postmark is red.

3a They also started a story that no proper entry of the mailing of such a letter could be found in the register of “mails sent” from Nauvo, but Mr. Strang caused the register to be examined,

3b And under the date of June 19th, 1844, the proper entry was found of such a letter to the distributing P.O. at Chicago, and the register at Burlington of “Mails received” contains the proper entry from Chicago.

4a In the winter of 1845-46 these facts were publicly proclaimed in the Temple at Nauvoo by Moses Smith, Samuel Shaw, and others, and an examination of the registers called for.

4b The next day crowds were at the P.O. to inspect the register, but though the register of every other quarter of the establishment of that P.O. was safely there, that particular quarter was nowhere to be found.

4c It never has never since been produced. Comment is unnecessary.

5a Mrs. Emma Smith recollects well of her husband receiving a letter from Mr. Strang, and holding a council on the subject, and names Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards, and John P. Greene as present at that council;

5b And also that a letter was sent to Mr. Strang in answer, but of the import of the answer she was not informed.

6a Immediately after the martyrdom of Joseph, John Taylor, Willard Richards and William W. Phelps took a kind of temporary direction of the affairs of the church,

6b Instructing the saints to wait patiently the hand of the Lord, assuring them that he had not left them without a shepherd, and that all things would be made known in due season.

6c To every question of the saints, Who is the prophet? replies were made in substance that the saints would know in due season, but that nothing could be done till the Twelve got home,

6d Because the appointment of a prophet, and the directions for the salvation of the church from the perils they were in, was contained in sealed packages directed to them.

7a Orson Hyde, and others of the Twelve who were then in the east, stated in public congregations in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities, that Willard

Richards had written to them that the appointment of a prophet was left with him under seal, to be opened on the return of the Twelve.

7b This assertion was so often made that the whole church were daily expecting to hear a new prophet proclaimed.

8a On the eighth of August, 1844, when Sidney Rigdon endeavored to obtain authority to lead the church, John P. Greene, marshal of the city of Nauvoo, told them:

8b They need not trouble themselves about it for Joseph has appointed one James J. Strang, who lives up north, to stand in his stead.

9a The sudden death of John P. Greene immediately after this declaration (under very extraordinary circumstances) left Willard Richards [Brigham Young's cousin] and John Taylor sole repositories of all documents on this subject, except this letter.

9b They had simply to suppress documents in their hands to set themselves up in power, or overthrow themselves and their pretensions by publishing them.

10a These and many other facts, which we have not room to state, make an array of testimony of the strongest kind in favor of this letter.

10b It is worthy of consideration that no one fact has been relied on against it, but that in various quarters different false tales have been told to disparage it, which a mere inspection of the letter or of public records would prove false.

10c The only reason which can be given for this continued resort to falsehoods is that there is no truth against it.

## TESTIMONY.

I, Jonathan Sumner, do hereby testify, that I was present at the Conference held in Nauvoo, soon after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, which was called by those who sought to place Sidney Rigdon at the head of the Church, while in conversation with a squad of Elders talking on the question of Rigdon's right to lead.--John P. Green, Marshall of the City, said they need not trouble themselves about it, for Joseph had appointed one to stand in his stead. I asked him why he was not here to take his place. He said he was not ready, but would be there after a time. I asked him where he lived; and he said up North a considerable distance. I asked his name and he said Strang, James J. Strang. I asked what sort of a man, and he

said a young man. I then asked whether he had ever been in Nauvoo, and he said he had been and that Joseph baptized him.

JONATHAN SUMNER.

Voree, June 30th, 1846.

Signed in the presence of,  
Benjamin C. Ellsworth,  
George Eberson,  
Phineas Wright.

Note--John P. Green, died very mysteriously a few days after the statement above made by him.

#### SECTION 4

*A Vision of Voree, to The Prophet, James J. Strang, given on June 18, 1844.*

1 On the eighteenth day of June, eighteen hundred and forty-four, James J. Strang was in the Spirit, and he was in the grove above the stone quarry on White River,

2 And he had a vision; and behold, he was carried away in the Spirit to the top of the hill in the west border of Racine, and Gardner's prairie was to the north, and the White River marshes to the south,

3 And he saw in the vision; and the lands round about were covered with many houses and gardens, and there were streets, and shops, and people; even a city of many inhabitants.

4 And the city was built of stone, and there were few houses of brick and less of wood, and the gardens were many; and a few houses were very great, and their inhabitants many.

5 There was a change in the vision, and the people with lively pace and smiling countenances thronged the streets and passed by.

6 There was another change, and they were all assembled in a vast hall, and James J. Strang, surrounded by wise men and counsellors and priests and eloquent orators, arose and taught the people;

7 And the Spirit of prophecy witnesseth unto him, so shall it be; and the vision ended, and he was strengthened but his faith was weak.

## SECTION 5

*The Ordination of James Strang under the hand of the Angel, administered on June 27, 1844. This occurred at the exact moment of Joseph Smith's death.*

1 On the twenty-seventh day of June, 1844, at five and a half o'clock in the afternoon, James J. Strang was in the Spirit, and the Angel of God came unto him and saluted him, saying,

2a Fear God and be strengthened and obey him, for great is the work which he hath required at thy hand.

2b Go on in hope and strength, and falter not, and he will sustain thee, and thou shalt triumph, for the voice of the Lord by the mouth of Joseph will he fulfill.

3a And the Angel of the Lord stretched forth his hand unto him and touched his head, and put oil upon him and said,

3b Grace is poured upon thy lips, and God blesseth thee with the greatness of the Everlasting Priesthood. He putteth might and glory and majesty upon thee, and in meekness and truth and righteousness will he prosper thee.

4a Thou shalt save his people from their enemies when there is no arm to deliver, and shalt bring salvation when destruction walketh in the house of thy God.

4b Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore thy God hath anointed thee with oil and set thee above all thy fellows.

5a Thy words shall be like sharp arrows in the heart of the wicked. Thou shalt rebuke those who pervert the word of thy God.

5b Thou shalt preach righteousness and the sublime mysteries in the ears of many people, and shall bring the gospel to many who have not known it and to the nations afar off.

6a Thou shalt drive backward and put to shame those that do evil, and the workers of iniquity shall fall.

6b They shall be cast down and shall not be able to rise. With purity will the Lord thy God arm thee, and purity and truth shalt thou teach.

7 Keep the law of the Lord thy God in thy heart, and none of thy steps shall slide. With thee is the fountain of truth. In thy light shall the people of thy God see, for thou shalt speak his word unto them, and from thy lips shall they receive it.

8a The blessing of their God shalt thou put upon them, and his curse upon evil doers, if, after being oft rebuked, they repent not;

8b And before my people shalt thou go to lead them into my ways, for unto thee has the Lord thy God given salvation.

9a In righteousness shalt thou rule. Thou shalt redeem the poor and the needy from suffering and violence, and to thee God giveth judgment for them.

9b Thou shalt deliver the prey from the spoiler, for God, thy God, hath put them in thy hand.

10a And in weakness will he make thee strong. Thou shalt rule among his people.

10b Thou shalt break in pieces the rod of the oppressor and the yoke of the unjust ruler. They shall flee away, but the way of peace shall they not find.

11a While the day of the wicked abideth, shalt thou prepare a refuge for the oppressed and for the poor and needy.

11b Unto thee shall they come, and their brethren who are scattered shall come with them, and the destruction of the ungodly shall quickly follow, for it already worketh. Go thy way and be strong.

## SECTION 6

*A Revelation to the Prophet James J. Strang, concerning the service required of the saints, received on September 17, 1845.*

1 On the seventeenth day of January, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-five, the word of the Lord came unto James J. Strang, the Prophet of the Most High God and Revelator unto the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, saying,

2a Let all the saints humble themselves before me, and obey my commandments. Let them not forget my law, nor make my precepts of small account.



2b Let them give heed unto the gospel, and be continual witnesses for me before the world. Behold, I the Lord God have spoken it.

2c Let him that regards my voice obey. I have required this service of you, and I am not impoverished that you should lose your reward.

3a I have given you a trial of your faith, in that you are few in number, that you might have a witness before the world that your hearts are single toward me and that you seek not your own advantages;

3b But I will remember you in mercy and in blessings, for I will reward the faithful for all they shall suffer, many fold on earth, and more than ye have thought to ask in heaven.

4a Behold, for the trying of your faith and that my Church might be purified, have I sent lying spirits unto those whose hearts are set for gain and not for the flock,

4b And strong delusion unto those who have lifted themselves up in pride and power, and have forgotten the law of the Lord, even my law which their own lips have taught.

4c Behold, now have they their reward, but shame and swift destruction followeth.

5a The reward of the righteous is with me, and unto the faithful are the promises.

5b And now I am your God. I require this service of all the saints: that they go unto Voree and the country round about, and gain inheritance as they are severally able.

5c When they hear, let them obey with prudence and speedily. And there let them assemble together on the first day of every week, to strengthen one another, and to receive instruction and blessings from me.

6a Again I require of all who have received the priesthood, that they go out and preach the gospel, and teach as they are sent, the first day of every week.

7a And this tithing do I require now of all my saints, to the end that Voree may be established and may be a holy city unto me.

7b Yea, verily, I the Lord God require of all the saints, besides the assembling of themselves together and going out to preach and to teach on the first day of the week, that they shall consecrate unto me one tenth of their time and labor.

7c Yea, let those who will, go out and preach the gospel and the gathering unto Voree, according as I have commanded. Yea, let those who will, consecrate

unto me and pay into the Treasury of the Church, which is at Voree, the value of their labor.

7d Yea, let those who will, labor for the support of my servants who labor continually for me.

7e Yea, let those who will, serve me continually while they have wherewith to support their families, and the saints shall minister unto them while they preach the gospel and gathering, as they shall severally need.

7f Yea, let the saints give liberally according as they shall possess, but let none excuse himself that he consecrate unto me one tenth his time and labor, for thus shall my holy city be established.

7g Yea, verily, and the reward of the faithful is with me, and I will repay him many fold on earth, and in heaven with everlasting life.

8a Yea, and let my servant James J. Strang send out the Elders and those who have received the priesthood far and near, as my Spirit shall teach him;

8b And they shall go and bear witness in my name, for thus shall my Church be built up, till all the quorums assemble together in my holy city.

9a Be ye faithful, O ye children of the kingdom, for this is the covenant between me and you. I will remember you in mercy and in blessings if ye serve me.

9b And this will I do. Behold I the Lord have spoken it. I will give unto my servant James the plates of the book that was sealed, that he may translate them for you.

9c Yea, unto the faithful is this promise. Serve and obey me, and I will give unto him the plates of the ancient records which are sealed up, and he shall translate them unto you;

9d And this shall be a witness between me and those that serve me; and unto my servants who serve me faithfully, yea, unto whom I will, shall he show the plates, and they shall be faithful witnesses unto me, and thus shall my words be established.

## SECTION 7

*A Revelation to the Prophet James J. Strang, concerning the Voree Plates, and also a Vision of where the Plates were buried, Received on September 1, 1845.*

1a The Angel of the Lord came unto me, James, on the first day of September, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-five, and the light shined about him above the brightness of the sun,

1b And he showed unto me the plates of the sealed record, and he gave into my hands the Urim and Thummim.

1c And out of the light came the voice of the Lord saying, My servant James, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee, because I have tried thee and found thee faithful.

1d Behold, my servant James, I am about to bless thee with a great blessing, which shall be to those who love me, an immutable testimony; to those who know me not, a stumbling block;

1e but to those who have known me and have turned their hearts from me, a rock of offence. Yea, let them beware, for shame and destruction walk in their tracks, and their time abideth, but not long.

2a A work shall come forth, and the secrets of the past shalt thou reveal. Yea, by little and little shalt thou reveal it, according to the ability and faithfulness of my church, and of my servant whom I have placed above them.

2b Behold the record which was sealed from my servant Joseph. Unto thee it is reserved. Take heed that thou count it not a light thing, nor exalt thyself lest thou be stricken;

2c For by myself I swear that, as thou servest me faithfully and comest not short, thou shalt unlock the mysteries thereof, which I have kept hid from the world. Yea, as my servants serve me, so shalt thou translate unto them.

3a But in their weakness I have not forgotten them. Go to the place which the Angel of the Presence shall show thee, and there shalt thou dig for the record of my people in whose possession thou dwellest.

3b Take with thee faithful witnesses, for in evil will the unfaithful speak of thee, but the faithful and true shall know that they are liars, and shall not stumble for their words.

4a Speak thou unto the Elders of my church, and say unto them, Hear my voice and hearken to my words, for they are true and faithful. Testify, testify unto all the saints.

4b Testify, testify in all the world. He that rejecteth you, him will I reject in the day that I come in my kingdom.

4c Testify, testify unto him who has received my word and turned away. Let him now return unto me and obey and serve his God, lest he be smitten with a curse and his children curse him and his name be blotted out of the Book of Life.

5a Yea, those to whom I have revealed myself, let them hearken unto me now lest they be cast off in the day of my indignation, lest the consuming fire of the day of trial burn them up.

5b Yea, lest the second death make them his prey, and they be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

6a Rejoice, ye holy, for the day of your deliverance is near, and the time of your exaltation is at hand.

6b Faithful and true are my words, dividing the marrow from the bones, and truth from rottenness.

6c He that rejecteth them, him will I reject when I come in my kingdom.

7 And while I was yet in the Spirit, the Angel of the Lord took me away to the hill in the east of Walworth, against White River in Voree, and there he showed unto me the record buried under an oak tree as large as the body of a large man;

8 It was enclosed in an earthen casement, and buried in the ground as deep as to a man's waist;

9 And I beheld it as a man can see a light stone in clear water, for I saw it by Urim and Thummim;

10 And I returned the Urim and Thummim to the Angel of the Lord, and he departed out of sight.

## SECTION 8

*The Testimony of Witnesses who dug up the Voree Plates at the Prophet's request, on September 18, 1845.*

1a On the thirteenth day of September, 1845, we, Aaron Smith, Jirah B. Wheelan, James M. Van Nostrand, and Edward Whitcomb, assembled at the call of James J. Strang, who is by us and many others approved as a Prophet and Seer of God.

1b He proceeded to inform us that it had been revealed to him in a vision that an account of an ancient people was buried in a hill south of White River bridge, near the east line of Walworth County;

1c And leading us to an oak tree about one foot in diameter, told us that we would find it enclosed in a case of rude earthen ware under that tree at the depth of about three feet;

1d requested us to dig it up, and charged us to so examine the ground that we should know we were not imposed upon, and that it had not been buried there since the tree grew.

1e The tree was surrounded by a sward of deeply rooted grass, such as is usually found in the openings, and upon the most critical examination we could not discover any indication that it had ever been cut through or disturbed.

2a We then dug up the tree, and continued to dig to the depth of about three feet, where we found a case of slightly baked clay containing three plates of brass

2b. On one side of one is a landscape view of the south end of Gardner's prairie and the range of hills where they were dug.

2c On another is a man with a crown on his head and a scepter in his hand, above is an eye before an upright line, below the sun and moon surrounded with twelve stars, at the bottom are twelve large stars from three of which pillars arise, and closely interspersed with them are seventy very small stars.

2d The other four sides are very closely covered with what appear to be alphabetic characters, but in a language of which we have no knowledge.

3a The case was found imbedded in indurated clay so closely fitting it that it broke in taking out, and the earth below the soil was so hard as to be dug with difficulty even with a pickax.

3b Over the case was found a flat stone about one foot wide each way and three inches thick, which appeared to have undergone the action of fire, and fell in pieces after a few minutes exposure to the air.

3c The digging extended in the clay about eighteen inches, there being two kinds of earth of different color and appearance above it.

4a We examined as we dug all the way with the utmost care, and we say, with utmost confidence, that no part of the earth through which we dug exhibited any sign or indication that it had been moved or disturbed at any time previous.

4b The roots of the tree stuck down on every side very closely, extending below the case, and closely interwoven with roots from other trees. None of them had been broken or cut away.

4c No clay is found in the country like that of which the case is made.

5a In fine, we found an alphabetic and pictorial record, carefully cased up, buried deep in the earth, covered with a flat stone, with an oak tree one foot in diameter growing over it, with every evidence that the sense can give that it has lain there as long as that tree has been growing.

5b Strang took no part in the digging, but kept entirely away from before the first blow was struck till after the plates were taken out of the case;

5c And the sole inducement to our digging was our faith in his statement as a Prophet of the Lord that a record would thus and there be found.

AARON SMITH,  
JIRAH B. WHEELAN,  
J. M. VAN NOSTRAND,  
EDWARD WHITCOMB.

Testimony of a Gentile Newspaper:

#### CHARACTER OF THE MEN WHO DUG THE PLATES AT VOREE.

Our curiosity was sufficiently excited, to induce us to make ourselves more fully acquainted with the circumstances and facts. For this end we visited the gentlemen alluded to as Seer and Prophet. We were cordially received, the plates were shown us, and we examined the spot from which they purport to have been taken.

The Prophet appears to us a very intelligent man devoid of any thing like enthusiasm: and so far as we could judge honest and earnest in all he said. The men who subscribe the statement are said to be among the most honest and intelligent, in the neighborhood; and take it all together it is something to stagger an ordinary credulity. The popular opinion will doubtless call it a humbug, and so should we from the natural impulse of our mind, but when the testimony appears in opposition to such impulse, we are content to have no opinion about it. [Soupt. Tel.

## SECTION 9

*The Record of Rajah Manchou of Vorito. The Translation made by the Prophet James J. Strang of the Voree Plates, using the Urim and Thummim by the Gift and Power of God on September 18, 1845.*

1 My people are no more. The mighty are fallen and the young, slain in battle. Their bones bleached on the plain by the noonday shadow.

2 The houses are leveled to the dust, and in the moat are the walls. They shall be inhabited.

3 I have in the burial served them, and their bones in the Death-shade, towards the sun's rising, are covered.

4 They sleep with the mighty dead, and they rest with their fathers. They have fallen in transgression and are not, but the elect and faithful there shall dwell.

5 The word hath revealed it. God hath sworn to give an inheritance to his people where transgressors perished.

6 The word of God came to me while I mourned in the Death-shade, saying, I will avenge me on the destroyer. He shall be driven out.

7 Other strangers shall inhabit thy land. I an ensign there will set up. The escaped of my people there shall dwell when the flock disown the Shepherd and build not on the Rock.

8 The forerunner men shall kill, but a mighty prophet there shall dwell. I will be his strength, and he shall bring forth thy record.

9 Record my words, and bury it in the Hill of Promise.

## SECTION 10

*The Description of one side of one of the Voree Plates.*

1 First, an eye. The symbol of God who is all-seeing: consequently it is called THE ALL-SEEING EYE, and has been used as symbolical of the DEITY in all countries, and in all ages of the world.

2a Second, the figure of a man down to the waist, having a crown resembling a cap, and composed of radiating lines, on his head; and a scepter in his hand.

2b These are symbols of authority, and show him a ruler. As he has the sun, moon, and stars (all the natural lights) below him and only the ALL-SEEING above him, he is Prophet, Seer, Revelator, Translator, and First President of the Church;

2c Governing not by natural light, or mere human wisdom, but by revelation, or the word of God, and derives his authority solely from God, and not in any sense from the actions of men.

3 Third, the sun on the right, and the moon on the left. These represent the two Vice Presidents, or Counsellors in the First Presidency; the two largest natural lights being used as symbols, because they are to assist the First President in wisdom or natural light merely, and not by revelation.

4a Fourth, a cross-pillar above and resting upon the center large star and under the human figure; two pillars above and resting upon the two upper large stars, and below and between the sun and moon.

4b These represent Coadjutors, assistants or helps, of whom there have been several since the beginning of the Church, appointed by revelation.

5a Fifth, twelve stars, six around the sun, and six around the moon. These represent the High Council of the Church.

5b The division into classes of six each agrees with the established usages in the Church, one half to stand up for the accuser, and the other for the accused. This is not the High Council of a stake.

6a Sixth, twelve large stars, ten of these in two rows at the bottom of the plate, and the other two over them nearly between the sun and moon. They represent the Twelve Apostles.

6b These stars are larger than those which represent the High Council of the Church, because the Apostles have a more important ministry; but are placed below them because they are subject to their discipline, and below the symbols of the First Presidency because they are subject to its directions.

7 Seventh, seventy small stars immediately within the points of the twelve large ones, being six to each, except the center one which has only four. They represent the Seventies, who are subject to the direction of the Twelve Apostles.

8a Eighth, a straight line dropping down before the scepter. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation:



8b He that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

8c Thus He showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

8d And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.

9a These symbols were all prophetic of the order that should exist in the fulness of times.

9b Thus God, in his goodness to those who lived in days past, has shown them not only the rest which he had in reservation for them, but the perfectness of the means by which he would accomplish it.

9c Probably now we understand it only in part, but in times to come we shall *know as we are known*.

## FACSIMILE OF THE VOREE PLATES

From a woodcut printed as a broadside in 1847



*A Revelation, received by the Prophet, James J. Strang, on July 1, 1846, concerning war between the United States and Mexico and commanding the Saints to build a House of God.*

1a The word of the Lord God came unto the prophet James, on the first day of July, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-six, when James Knox Polk was president of the United States;

1b And behold they were at war with the Republic of Mexico, and the kings of Europe looked on with fear and anguish, but they knew not what the Lord would accomplish;

1c Neither did any of them heed his word, for in their pride are they exalted, and men have gone after their iniquitous ways.

2a But verily, verily, saith the Lord, I will send a rebuke and my judgments upon them, and they that have lifted up themselves will I abase,

2b And I will give judgment to my servant, even to my servant James J. Strang, whom I have taken from among the honorable men of the earth, and have built up by my strange counsel.

2c Verily, if he fails not of his meekness, and obeys my commandments, and remembers to keep all my precepts, I will lift up his head to redeem the oppressed, and to give comfort to the poor among all people.

2d Upon thrones shall he sit, and the scepter shall be in his hand, and he shall lift up an ensign to all the earth, and my servants who are faithful to me shall be princes and rulers over many people.

3a. Therefore, my servant James, if thou wilt receive honor and glory, verily, verily, thou shalt lead my people, and my word shalt thou receive from me and teach unto my people.

3b And verily, I will not now excuse thee or accept any other service at thy hands, for this is thine office:

3c Verily, verily, thou shalt be Prophet, Seer, Revelator, and Translator, and shalt preside over my people, or thou shalt have no priesthood in my church, and shalt receive no honor in my kingdom.

4a Therefore, complain unto me no more, but rebuke the complainers faithfully for my name's sake, and if they will not hearken unto thee, they shall be cast out from among my people.

4b Thy strength shall be in meekness and in my word which I shall speak unto thee, and with words of fire shalt thou consume those whose voices are raised against thee,

4c And their hearts shall fail them at thy rebuke, until they are altogether cast off, and my Spirit departs from them.

5a It pleases me that it hath been in the hearts of my servants to build a house for thee to dwell in, for I have required thee to serve me continually, and not to serve thyself.

5b Take heed therefore, that thou have a room for translations therein, for it is my will that thou translate ancient records, hidden truths, unto my people.

5c It is my will that thou do it in thy house, and not in the field as thou hast, nor in the houses of unbelievers, that they may look upon sacred things.

5d Therefore, whoso seeketh my word, let him make speed, and let every good work be accomplished speedily.

6a And then shall my people build a house unto my name, that I may institute those ordinances which pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.

6b For since my people have been sifted, I will try them again whether they will receive the truth, and pervert it not.

6c And I will show unto my servant James all things pertaining to this house and the priesthood of those who shall minister therein.

6d And I will give unto him the preparation for a holy endowment therein, that he may instruct my people in the principles of the mysteries of my Kingdom, as they are severally able to learn.

7a And if my people will build a house unto me according to my commandments, and will not be slothful therein, but will make speed to build, then will I endow them,

7b Even so many as are faithful and obey me and hearken to my words and to the words of my servants whom I have appointed to be their leaders.

7c But to the disobedient and rebellious will I not give power, and if they receive the word, it shall be dead unto them, and they shall not have power nor understand it.

7d And I will separate between the righteous and the wicked, and between the obedient and the rebellious.

8a And I will try my people with a great trial. And because they have been tried in chastisement, I will now even try them in faith and in obedience to my law.

8b And if they will diligently serve me, and give heed unto all my words, that I have spoken and shall speak unto them by the mouth of my servant James, behold, in the house which they shall build unto me, will I reveal unto them things which have been kept in the secrets of heaven from before the world was, things without which the kingdom of God cannot hold dominion, nor mankind be redeemed from deceit and violence;

8c And these things are exceeding precious and to be obtained by obedience and patience and devotion to truth.

9a Therefore, whosoever will not abide the preparation faithfully, shall not be blessed, neither shall ye teach him the mysteries of the kingdom, nor will I give him power;

9b But of all you teach the mysteries, shall you take a great covenant. And he that abideth not in his covenant, shall receive of the wrath of God according to the measure of his covenant and the evil he doeth therein;

9c Yea, verily, out of his own mouth shall he be judged, and as he hath spoken, so shall it be done unto him.

10a Therefore, let all my saints set their hands diligently to build a house unto my name, that I may come and dwell therein, and that I may restore unto them that which they have lost,

10b And may give unto them those things which I gave unto my church in former days, and may reveal unto them things which have never been revealed among men.

11a And if my people will cease all their contentions, and their backbitings and jealousies, and will present themselves holy before me, then will I appoint unto them, in the days of their poverty, a place for their baptisms for their dead, which pertains unto my house.

11b But in their controversies and contentions I will not bless them, nor bestow upon them mine authority in the most holy things, because they do not understand my Law, nor do they know for whom they shall baptize;

11c And while they contend one with another, they will not receive my word, nor receive wisdom from me;

11d They call evil good, and good evil, and they are not wise. Therefore is the blessing withheld till they humble themselves, and hearken to the voice of truth, which my servant James, who is faithful, speaketh unto them.

12a And I will show unto my servant James the pattern of the house which ye shall build unto my name, and all things pertaining thereto;

12b And it shall be built on the prairie near White River, to the northwestward of the Hill of Promise, and the city of Voree shall be built around it, both on the plain and on the hills.

12c And it shall be a holy city and a strong hold of truth and righteousness unto me, if my servants serve me; and upon the Hill of Promise shall ye build a hall which shall be a strong tower unto me,

12d And the pattern thereof, and all things pertaining thereto, will I show unto my servant James, for it is the beginning of the preparation whereby the poor may be exalted, and the oppressed lifted up, and all my servants made equal in their temporal things;

12e For unless they be one in their temporal things, the fulness of my Spirit shall be withheld from them.

13a Therefore, come all ye my servants, and bring your silver and your gold and your precious stones, and bring ye timber and stone, and labor with your hands and with cattle, and build a house unto me;

13b And see that ye do all things according to the pattern which I will show unto my servant James, as he shall deliver it unto you;

13c And make ye a freewill offering, and build a tower of strength unto me upon the Hill of Promise;

13d For if ye do all these things, dominion shall be given unto you, and Daniel the prophet shall proclaim the kingdom of your God, and shall call forth the saints to possess it.

14a Take heed therefore, O ye my saints, for three unclean spirits have gone forth among you to destroy you.

14b The first is jealousy, and she dresseth in garments of modesty. Envy walketh before her, and discourseth of prudence. She saith to every one, There is none like me to you before the Lord.

15 The second is ambition. Distrust followeth her, whispering into the ears of each passer by. Of every industrious servant she says, I fear he seeks more than his own; and of the prudent, I fear he will never accomplish his work.

16a The third is lust. Sensuality walks before her, and adultery at her right hand. They clothe themselves alternately in the garments of virgins and matrons.

16b Their tongues discourse sweet music to him whose feet begin to slip, and they rebuke unsuspecting virtue harshly; but they walk in the way of death, and their path goes down to the pit. Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

17a And now let every unclean thing be put away from among you, and purify yourselves before me, that ye may be prepared for your washings and your anointings and the blessings and revelations which I have in store for you;

17b For unless ye do these things, ye cannot receive the blessings.

### SECTION 13

*A Revelation received by the Prophet James J. Strang, concerning those who fled into the wilderness from the Holy City, Nauvoo. Received on July 8, 1846.*

1 On the eighth day of July, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-six, the word of the Lord came unto James J. Strang, concerning the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the planting of the stake of Voree, saying,

2a Trouble not yourselves any more concerning those who have been driven out of my city, and gone into the wilderness.

2b For in the day that they fled to the wilderness where I had not told them to go, and were cast out of my holy city, which they had polluted, and from their habitations round about; even in that very day were they rejected of me.

2c For with much long suffering and patience had I waited on them, and warned them, and sent my servants unto them, and with judgments had rebuked them; and they would not return unto me.

2d And all their usurpations and lyings and false teachings have been an abomination unto me, and a stink in my nostrils; and their unlawful administrations have been as naught before me; and therein have I judged them with grievous sickness and sore judgments; therefore are they utterly cast out.

3a But all who have hearkened unto my voice, and gave heed unto my words before I cast out those who polluted my holy city, and all who will hearken to the strong testimony which my servants, the Elders, have carried out, and not altogether reject my words which I have spoken by the mouth of my servants in these last days;

3b Even they shall be preserved in the bosom of my Church, and shall be taught in the way of truth.

3c If they have done wrong, they shall make restitution. If they have followed usurpers and apostates, they shall renounce them.

3d But if they will hearken to my word when it comes to them, they shall not be cast out. But if they will utterly reject it, they shall be cast out and shall be to you as heathen men.

4a And I will feel after those whose feet slid and whose steps faltered; and if they harden not their hearts, they shall be converted, and I will heal them, and will make their hands strong in the way of truth.

5a Therefore, let not my servants trouble themselves with vain contentions, nor make themselves wise above my word;

5b And trouble not thyself about those who have been rejected of me, but seek ye diligently for wise men filled with the Spirit and obedient unto my Law and unto my servants whom I have set above them.

5c And appoint them to the several quorums and offices of the Church; and if they become disobedient and rebellious, they shall be removed and others put in their places.

5d And this shall ye do in wisdom and with prudence, but the First Presidency ye shall appoint by my word only, for this is a Law unto you.

## SECTION 14

*A Revelation in Relation to the Indian Mission, and the Vision thereof Given August 25, 1846.*

1a I, James J. Strang, was at Elizabeth, on the Monongahela River, on the twenty-fifth day of August, in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, and had a vision;

1b And lo, I beheld a land amidst wide waters, and covered with large timber, with a deep broad bay on one side of it.

1c And I wandered over it upon little hills and among rich valleys, where the air was pure and serene, and the unfading foliage, with its fragrant shades, attracted me till I wandered to bright clear waters, scarcely ruffled by the breeze.



1d And Indians in canoes glided about, and caught fish, and sat down to eat; and they gathered in assemblies, and were taught words of truth and ways of holiness, and they hearkened. And I beheld many wonders there.

2a And one came near unto me, and I said, What meaneth this? And he answered and said,

2b Behold, here shall God establish his people, even the sons of Joseph, on an everlasting foundation; and from hence shall the gospel of the kingdom go unto the tribes, and they shall not any more be despised, for the nations that set the foot upon their necks will be cut off that they be no more a people.

2c Behold, he hath already begun it. The sword is already bathed in blood, which spareth not their destroyers. And blood shall not cease till their most haughty oppressor is laid low to rise no more.

3a And he hath chosen this nation to begin vengeance for them.

3b And if this people will turn unto him, and repent of all their evil deeds, and no more slay the prophets which he sendeth unto them, but will hearken unto them to do the things which they shall speak unto them, and keep the words of the Lord, and his commandments to do them, then will he exalt the nation and establish it,

3c For he hath raised it up by the hands of wise men, whom he set up for that very purpose, to be the instrument of his purpose in the last days.

4a And upon this land where thou standest shall the gospel of the kingdom be established among the Lamanites, and from thence shall it go forth to their tribes.

4b And blessing and honor and great glory shall be on those that teach them, for he will make their arm strong, and their bow shall abide in strength, and they shall not bow to the oppressor;

4c And the power of the Gentile shall not be on them, for the arm of God shall be with them to support.

5a And here shall the Lamanites come to learn the Law of the Lord their God, who hath preserved them, that they be not utterly destroyed.

5b And other barbarians shall come also, and shall learn ways of holiness; for the Lord their God shall teach them, and his people shall instruct them, and shall go forth as ministers of truth unto all people.

6a And I asked him, What meaneth all this? And he said unto me, Thou art carried away in the spirit, and brought to this land in the midst of waters, in the north country, that the Lord might show thee what he will do hereafter.

6b For here shall be a stake and a corner stone of Zion, for the strengthening of her curtains round about. Here shall the house of Manasseh and the house of Ephraim and the Gentiles build a house unto me, and bow down to me therein.

6c For the sons of Jacob shall lay the foundations thereof, and therein shall they worship their God. And to this house shall the thousands of the house of Israel come, when the ice melts at the north.

6d And there shall they meet their brethren in peace, and God shall be in the midst of them.

7a Behold, thou shalt see this land with thine own eyes before thou returnest to thine house, and shalt long to set thy foot upon it.

7b Nevertheless, when the children of the household of faith have peace, then thou shalt go there and minister in the work of the Lord thy God.

7c Spy it out, therefore, and let the servants of God dwell there to do his work, for it hath abundance in the riches of the forest, and in the riches of the earth, and in the riches of the waters; and there shall the children of God learn his law to do it.

8a And the Lord God shall add possessions unto the faithful, and give good gifts unto them that keep his law, and he will establish them therein forever.

8b And their possession shall become as a paradise, yielding fruits every month, and the strength of Zion shall be there to do the work of the Lord, to work deliverance to the captive and judgments upon the ungodly, in the day of the Lord.

8c For he will exalt his people in righteousness, and deliver them in judgments. And the Gentiles shall be made the instruments of his purposes, and by them will he work deliverance. The Lord will show thee all things in his time.

9a For the day is near when thou shalt meet many Lamanites, and shalt talk with them of these things. And with them shalt thou behold this land, and then shalt thou begin this work.

9b If Satan hinder thee, strive against him, and thou shalt overcome and shalt prevail, for the Lord God hath spoken it.

## SECTION 15

*A Revelation, concerning the standing of apostles Sidney Rigdon and George Adams, given on October 19, 1846.*

1a The General Conference of the Church of the Saints, assembled at Voree on the nineteenth day of October, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-six,

1b Having under consideration the standing of Sidney Rigdon, one of the First Presidents of the Church, who acteth not in his Presidency and cometh not up to do his duty and stand in his calling, could not sustain him with their faith and prayers;

1c Therefore they with one voice desired James J. Strang, the Prophet of the Lord, to inquire his will concerning his servant Sidney Rigdon.

2 And now this is the answer of the Lord concerning him:

3a Behold, verily, my servant Sidney Rigdon rebelleth against me, and hath rebelled against me for a long time;

3b And I was grieved with him, yet I felt after him and had compassion on him and remembered his faith and his labors, and reproved him by my Spirit and by afflictions and by judgments,

3c But he would none of my reproofs. Satan troubleth him, and he hath sought to establish his own work and not mine; for Satan inspireth him thereto, and hath entered into him, and giveth him thoughts and dreams and visions.

3d Therefore he shall not stand in his Presidency; for I do take his office from him, and give it unto one who will serve me.

4a Therefore, my servant George J. Adams shall be one of the First Presidents of my Church, to stand instead of Sidney Rigdon, to assist my servant James J. Strang in the Presidency of my Church,

4b That my word may go forth to the ends of the earth and to all the nations thereof, to the Gentiles first and then to the Jews;

4c For the day cometh, and is near at hand, when the arm of the Lord shall be revealed in power in converting the heathen and the house of Ephraim and the house of Manasseh to the gospel of their salvation.

5a And the fulness of the unpolluted gospel shall go forth to all nations, and the unpolluted words of the prophets who are in their graves shall be spoken again to men on earth, that they may know that I am God, and there is none else.

## SECTION 16

A Revelation, concerning William Marks and young Joseph Smith III, given on November 6, 1846.

1a On the sixth day of November, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-six, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet James, saying,

1b Because my servant Aaron hath not been faithful in his calling to stand up and give counsel unto thee, and to hold up thy hands as a faithful Counsellor unto thee,

1c But hath set himself up to teach by revelation in my Church, and hath yielded himself unto evil doers to contend against thee, and to bind thee with bands that thou should not speak my words, and hath weakened thy hands and borne them down; therefore shall he not be any more thy Counsellor.

2a For he abideth not in his wisdom which I gave unto him, and hath turned his thoughts unto foolishness, and hath become a stumbling block unto many who are afar off by his follies.

2b And because he will not hearken unto my words to do them, but speaketh evil of the truth;

2c Therefore is my hand upon him to remove him, lest he lead my people astray that they enter not into my rest, and wrath, indignation, and overwhelming destruction fall upon him, and there be none to deliver.

3a And because my servant William Marks loveth me with full purpose of heart, and seeketh unto me to serve me; therefore shall he be Counsellor unto thee instead of my servant Aaron,

3b And shall assist thee by his counsels and by his wisdom which I have given unto him in establishing a stake of Zion at Voree, and in lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes of Zion, that my work may no longer be delayed and hindered, because my servant Aaron doeth it not;

3c For I the Lord will accomplish mine own work in mine own time, and I will set up the faithful and remove the unbelieving as to me seemeth good, for none shall hinder me.

4a And if my servant William will be a faithful Counsellor, then will I sustain him and lift him up, and by his hands the poor shall prosper.

4b And the words which I speak unto thee, shall thy Counsellors speak in the ears of my people, and they shall teach them in wisdom;

4c For through thy ministration, by means of the keys I have given thee, shall my words be given, and thou and thy Counsellors shall proclaim it unto my people

and to the nations of the earth, teaching all my words as thou shalt give unto them, even as thou receive them from me.

5a And thou shalt take my servant Joseph Smith, the son of the prophet Joseph, who was slain by the hands of wicked men, for he hath been consecrated unto me in his infancy,

5b And thou shalt anoint him with oil, and shalt lay thy hands upon him, and ordain him, and shalt set him in the Presidency as one of the First Presidents of my Church.

5c For he is filled with the Holy Ghost and with wisdom, and my covenant with his father will I keep with him and with his posterity after him, if they serve me.

5d And I will exalt him in strength and might and majesty, and he shall be President and Patriarch in the true Israel of faith in these last days, even as was my servant Hyrum, whose blood with the blood of my servant Joseph crieth unto me for vengeance continually.

6a And in his youth my servant William Marks shall assist him, and uphold him, and be in all things a Coadjutor unto him in the First Presidency of my Church.

6b Let my servant William therefore take heed unto his ways, that he give unto him wise counsel, and build him up in righteousness, and hold up his hands, and admonish him of every evil;

6c For if he do this, my arm shall sustain him forever, and my grace shall be sufficient for him in the day when all mine come unto me.

6d Yea, I will do good unto him both in this world and in that which is to come, and will remember his posterity after him forever, because he sheweth kindness unto the fatherless.

6e And the voice of my servant Joseph shall be a witness unto me against the nations.

7a And his mother Emma shall be a counsellor unto him, for I am with her and have delivered her from the hands of her enemies, that I may exalt her to stand in her lot among the saints in my holy place.

7b She loveth him tenderly, and because she hath set her heart to righteousness, and resisteth evil doers; therefore shall she watch over him, and in life or in death shall she observe his ways to do good unto him.

7c She hath been faithful unto me in many perils, and in much tribulation. Therefore will I remember her in the days to come.

7d She shall abide in her standing, and the holy unction which hath been placed upon her shall not depart from her. Amen.

8a And unless my servant Aaron make speed to humble himself before me, and cease to deny my words, I will stretch out my hand upon him, and he shall be brought very low, and none shall heed him or do good unto him.

8b And he shall know that I am God. But if he will return unto me, and hearken to my words, I will again raise him up, and remember the works which he hath done in the times that are past, and his patience and his faith.

8c And I will raise him up, and his voice shall be heard again on the mountains and in the valleys, and he shall sit in the councils of honorable men in the house of Israel;

8d And I will give him wisdom again, as I gave him wisdom in days that are past, and he shall serve me forever.

## SECTION 17

*An Extract from a Revelation, concerning Kirtland and its rebellion, given on December 21, 1846.*

1a Because Kirtland is filled with unbelief and apostasy; and those who have gathered there and taken my name upon them regard not my word, and hearken not to my law, neither observe my counsel nor hear the words of my prophets,

1b But have altogether rejected mine anointed, done violence to the truth, refused my word, and rebelled against my law and mine authority-

1c Therefore shall Kirtland be a waste and a desolation, a den of wickedness, and a habitation of the unfaithful, the unbelieving, and the rebellious.

1d And the desolation thereof shall continue, nor shall it be cleansed of its uncleanness until they who have polluted it be utterly destroyed therefrom;

1e For they seek continually to deceive and to be deceived, and will neither be faithful themselves nor suffer others to become pure in their midst.

1f And they seek the establishment of their own will rather than mine, but they shall be utterly confounded, and their desolation shall increase and become heaps, and their substance shall waste, and their houses shall fall, and their land shall fail of its increase, and the waters thereof shall dry up.

2a There shall Satan's seat be, and there shall be the gathering of unclean things, for they will not obey me.

2b And their power, and their authority, and their blessings, I take from them, that I may bestow them upon another people whom I will call together;

2c And from the midst of Kirtland will I call all who will turn unto me and serve me, that they may escape its curses.

2d Let all my saints flee from Kirtland as from a desolating scourge, and let them not gather there; for it is no longer a stake for the curtains of the strength of Zion, but is a rent and a weakness and a nakedness of unbelief.

## SECTION 18

*A Revelation through the Prophet James J. Strang, officially establishing the Order of Enoch according to the command of the Lord, given January 12, 1848.*

1 On the twelfth of January in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty eight, the Order of Enoch was established on the Hill of Promise at Voree in pursuance of the command which came forth on the first day of July in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty-six,

2 By the union of James J. Strang, Benjamin G. Wright, Phineas Wright, Samuel Wright, Seth C. Childs, Lyman Reynolds, Luther T. Prindle, Anson N. Prindle, William Savage, Finley Page, Francis Cooper, and Samuel C. Hull,

3 By the consecration of all their substance and the organization of their families as one household, with James J. Strang as Patriarch of the household.

4 The Order now consists of about one hundred and fifty persons, having had considerable additions and several having drawn back from it.

5 Of the original members, Seth C. Childs, Lyman Reynolds and William Savage have drawn back.

## SECTION 19

*Revelation given through the Prophet James, J. Strang on January 7, 1849. At this time, the Saints were slack in following the commands to build up Voree, though a*

*few there remain faithful. Those who fail to tithe and build the Temple will not enter therein.*

1a Hearken, O ye saints, and give ear; for the time to favor Zion is at hand, and the day of her redemption draweth near.

1b Draw near unto me and learn, for the ways of man are foolishness before me. Behold, ye shall be one; and if ye are not one, ye are none of mine.

1c And ye shall all speak the same thing. Ye are cursed; ye are confounded, because ye have many tongues, like unto Mystery Babylon, and many are running to and fro, speaking in their own wisdom, which is folly before me.

1d By their speech gross darkness filleth the minds of the people.

1e Those whom I have called to preach the gospel to the nations, have left serving me to contend against mine anointed, and I have not strengthened them, neither has their work prospered.

1f They have only accomplished to scatter, and their evil ways follow them.

2a But I have a few names left in Voree who have not denied my word, nor rebelled against mine authority, nor done despite to mine anointed.

2b And they shall be mine when I come to be glorified on earth. And there are a few in the Isles of the North who have not denied my name.

2c When dominion is given to the saints, I will remember their works. Nevertheless, as a people, ye have been slack in serving me.

2d Ye have broken my commandments, and despised mine authority, and my precepts have been to you a vain thing.

2e Ye are a stiff necked and rebellious people, who delight in your own vanities, and prefer your lusts to the chief of the things which God giveth.

2f But such of you as draw near unto me, I will draw near unto them, and will save them. I have given you good gifts, and you have consumed them upon your lusts;

2g I have chastised you, and ye have taken my name in vain; I have called you together to enjoy the blessings of my people, and ye have not heeded my call;

2h I have revealed my authority to those that gathered, and they have spurned it; I have appointed shepherds unto you, and ye have despised them, and have walked in your own ways, where they did not lead you;

2i And because of your rebellious hearts are you blind and deaf, that seeing you perceive not, and hearing you understand not.



3a Ye have robbed me in tithes and in offerings, and have been slothful in building a house unto my name, that I may dwell in it, and in building a tower of strength for the defense and the dwelling of Zion.

3b Come now, therefore, and bring in your tithes, and build a house unto me, that I may reveal most precious things unto you.

3c And make unto me a freewill offering, for a stronghold upon the Hill of Promise, according to the pattern which I have shown unto my servant James, and of which he has begun to lay the foundation, and I will show all things unto him in their time.

3d And if ye do these things, I will give you strength that your enemies shall not prevail over you, and this shall be your possession.

3e Moreover, I have given you the Islands in the Great Lakes for a possession. There shall you dwell apart from the Gentiles, and none shall make you afraid.

3f For my law shall be kept there, and judgment shall be rendered against those that despise it.

4a If ye will therefore possess these things, remember my law, to keep it. Forget not the precepts which I have given you, but act wisely, according to the wisdom which I have revealed unto you;

4b And despise not my word, for it is not a vain thing. I have given you wisdom, with promise. If ye will not live by it, the promise is not unto you.

4c It is a vain thing for you to witness my word, if ye will not regard it, to live by it.

5a At Voree shall your possessions be purchased with money, and you shall make speed to redeem that which you have purchased.

5b To that end have I blessed you, and you have consumed the blessings on things which are not good for you; yea, even the Order which I have commanded you to establish according to the Order of the Church of the First Born, have done this.

5c Yet because the chief among them have sought unto me, and have admonished unto faithfulness, and have kept my words, I will yet bless them, and will give them the kingdom, if they abide in well doing.

6a Once more I command all my saints to bring in their tithes, according to the Law I have given them, and build a house unto me.

6b Whosoever will not do it, shall not enter into the house of the Lord. Let mine Apostles call on all the saints, both by word and proclamation, to do this thing.

6c And let faithful and chosen ones be sent unto them, to receive of their tithes for this work, and let the work progress from this time forward.

7a And send faithful ones unto the saints, and call on them to make a freewill offering for the tower which I have commanded you to build on the Hill of Promise;

7b And let the same be built, that it may be a habitation and a defense for the saints that shall gather together and keep the Order of Enoch, which I have revealed unto my servants;

7c And let a subscription be circulated, that those who have not sold their possessions and cannot yet gather up their goods to the places appointed, may assist in building the towers of Zion, and may obtain an inheritance among the faithful.

8a And ye shall establish this Order at the stake which I have appointed among the Lamanites, and there shall ye keep it in all your habitations.

8b And I will multiply you, and increase you exceedingly. And those that are strong in my ways, will I make patriarchs and rulers in their tribes, and princes in their houses.

8c Their inheritances shall be appointed unto them, and to their houses, and their posterity after them for a perpetual possession.

8d Let many gather to the Islands which I have appointed for your gathering, that this Order may be kept more perfectly;

8e For there will I give you much possession for an inheritance, if ye will go up and possess it.

8f And such as shall be appointed of the Order of Enoch, by the voice of the Order, shall go up and possess the land, but they shall retain a strong hold at Voree, for it must needs be that they keep a possession there, and my work requires it.

8g And if they do not redeem and preserve it, they must be afflicted with sore affliction. If they are faithful unto me, my strength shall shield them and prosper them.

9a And let this Order be an example unto all, both to the believing and to the unbelieving; for if they do not walk in my ways more perfectly, I will yet cast them off.

9b For the properties of this Order are all mine. He that draws back from this Order, and takes away that which he has consecrated, robbeth me, saith the Lord.

9c Nevertheless, now, ye shall not withhold; for he shall be trodden down by whom I will, in my own time.

9d And ye have polluted yourselves by your excess of flesh which ye have eaten, and by the unclean things and the poisonous drugs which ye have consumed upon your lusts.

9e Behold, ye say ye need these things. But I say they are not good for you.

9f Who is man, that he should prefer himself to God? And for these are ye in debt to your enemies. Except I deliver you, they shall oppress you.

9g But the righteous will I establish, and the wicked will I cast off.

10a Put away covetousness. Remember that all that ye possess is mine. Cast all idlers out of this Order.

10b Let no man call aught his own, nor buy nor sell as though it were his. But let all be the common property of all, as I have given unto you; and let those buy and sell, who are appointed by common consent.

10c And this shall be your inheritance, and the inheritance of your children forever.

10d He that is faithful in this little, shall be made prince of a village, or ruler of a tower; and he that is faithful therein, shall be made patriarch of a tribe, or ruler of many cities in my kingdom.

11a And ye shall not provoke one another. But ye shall console and strengthen one another. Ye shall strengthen the weak;

11b For with kindness and much charity will I give you to prevail, and ye shall save them. And ye shall not contend against one another.

12a Rebel not against my servant James; for I am with him, and I have given unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

12b Whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him. Whosoever receiveth him, receiveth those whom I have sent.

12c Whosoever heareth not his words, heareth not mine. Whosoever heareth not his words, hearkeneth not to the words of those whom I have sent.

12d For I have made him the chief shepherd of the whole flock on earth. They that are of the flock hear his voice. If not, they go astray to destruction.

13a Behold, I am his friend; for he has been faithful unto me. And the keys which I have given to him shall not be taken from him in this world, neither in the world to come.

13b They that speak evil of him are enemies unto me, saith the Lord. They have given themselves unto lies, and their hearts to wickedness.

13c For he is meeker than Moses, more patient than Job, and has kept himself unpolluted in the midst of the lustful and ungodly till they have departed from him.

14a Ye know not his patience, nor his faith, nor his trials and sufferings. How have ye cast your toil on him?

14b Ye have required him to bring redemption to Zion, and prosperity to you, when ye lifted not your hands. Because he has not done it, many have reviled him and denied my name.

14c But to as many as are faithful, will I give power to become heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

14d And I have a great work for him to do, and with speed shall he do it, if ye uphold him in faith and confidence and prayer.

14e For my hidden word shall be translated, and given to those that will receive it. And I have called him to this work.

15a And if my servant George J. Adams will be his Counsellor, let him come and dwell near unto my servant James, and assist him in presiding, and in the school of the prophets, and in carrying my word to the saints, and to the nations, and to far countries.

15b But let his dwelling be in the inheritance of the saints. If he do this, I will sustain him and will make him a host, and the head of nations.

16a Behold, my servant William Marks has gone far astray in departing from me, yet I give unto him a little space that he may return and receive my word, and stand in his place;

16b For I remember his work that he has done in the time that is past.

16c If he will return and abide faithful, I will make him great, and his possessions shall be great, and he shall possess a city, and his children shall dwell therein; a nation shall call him blessed.

17a And my servants the Apostles have not filled their mission in preaching my gospel to the nations of the earth, but have betaken themselves to their own work.

17b If they had obeyed me, I would have given them a host as the fruit of their labor, and added to them their food, raiment and possessions also.

17c Do I not possess all? And am I impoverished that I cannot reward the faithful? I will provide for him that obeys me, and array him that regards my words.

18a I have protected you from all your enemies; I have turned men's hearts that they should do good unto you, and not persecute you;

18b I have given you a home in a bountiful land; and ye have not done good according to my abundant mercies, nor regarded me according to my loving kindness.

18c But ye have made yourselves like the Gentiles, and have sought your own ways, and not mine.

18d And now turn unto me, all ye my people, lest the disobedient and the rebellious be cut off, and cast out of his possession, and persecution and wrath come on those who are slack in serving me, and I give you chastisement and much sorrow.

18e For your enemies shall be upon you, and ye shall flee before them, if ye turn not to me to be faithful.

## SECTION 19

*A Revelation through the Prophet James J. Strang, concerning baptism for the dead, given on August 9th, 1849.*

1a A revelation from Jesus Christ, according to the power which God appointed unto him;

1b And he sent Elijah the prophet unto his servant James, to make it known unto him, and to command him to cause the living and the dead to hear the word,

1c And to give him power to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

1d Hearken unto me, all ye ends of the earth, saith the Lord God, and give ear and hear, ye depths of the pit, and ye shall live;

1e For I have committed the gospel of the resurrection and of everlasting life to my servants who hold the keys of the dispensation of the last times.

1f Therefore, hearken unto them and obey them, ye that live; that you may obtain honor, and glory, and power, and everlasting life.

2a Behold, I have tried my saints with a great trial, and some have been found faithful; for they have not denied my name, but have remembered my word, and kept my commandments.

2b And because my servants have put away contentions from among them, and have united with one heart and one mind to do the work which I have committed unto them, and with their whole hearts have drawn near unto me to serve me;

2c Therefore I appoint unto the saints that there shall be baptisms for the dead at Voree, during their poverty, and until a sufficient time to build a temple unto my name, as I have commanded them.

2d And I sanctify White River unto them, and make it holy for this ordinance, even from the bathing pool unto the water wheel.

3a And I command you, ye saints, saith the Lord, that a record shall be kept among you of all baptisms for the dead; and witnesses shall record their testimonies of all your administrations therein.

3b And the recorder shall be present, and shall be an eye witness of your baptisms; and shall hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth;

3c That in all your recordings, it may be recorded in heaven; that whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven.

3d And if more than one recorder be necessary, yet there shall be but one record, to which all the recorders shall bring their testimonies to be recorded.

4a And whosoever acts as recorder, shall be called and ordained to that authority, that what he records may be valid, and may be recorded in the archives of heaven.

4b And let all your records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple, saith the Lord, to be had in remembrance from generation to generation.

4c And no one shall administer baptism for the dead, but he who is appointed thereunto. And all who are called, shall be anointed and ordained to this calling.

5a And these shall be baptized for the dead: all the faithful saints who keep and abide in the Order of Enoch;

5b All who have paid tithing according to my law, for the building of a house unto my name in Voree, and for the upbuilding of my Church;

5c All who from this time forward will and do come up and do these things, striving faithfully to redeem the time, that a house may be speedily built unto my name, wherein I may reveal mysteries, and institute among the saints the ordinances for the endowment of Zion and all her municipals;

5e And all who, standing in the priesthood, have labored faithfully in their several ministries from the time the commandment went forth to build a house unto my name in Voree.

6a And for these shall ye be baptized: every saint according to his right, and in his order, shall be baptized for any deceased husband, wife, posterity, or progenitor, to the third and fourth generation;

6b Any brother, or sister, whom he in faith believes has received the gospel in the spirit.

6c Every saint shall be baptized for any relative unto the third and fourth generation;

6d For any person betrothed to him in marriage;

6e For any foster father, mother, brother, sister, or child, who shall be signified to him by tongue, or dream, or vision, or spirit ministering in fire, or angel, or voice from God.

6f And if I will that any of my faithful servants of the Aaronic Priesthood be baptized for any other, I will send my angels to signify it unto them.

6g But unto my servants of the Melchizedek Priesthood will I speak by mine own voice, or minister in fire.

7a And, behold, every Apostle shall be baptized for whosoever shall be committed to him for redemption from death, by my word, saith the Lord, as I reveal my will severally unto them,

7b That they may be saviors of the dead, and may get honor, and glory, and majesty, and dominion unto themselves forevermore;

7c And by their voices will I appoint redemption, and honor, and glory unto whomsoever I will.

8a Behold, my servants Joseph, and Hyrum, and David, and Moses, and many of their fellow laborers in this dispensation, who have gone with them to the pit to preach redemption to the prisoners, have prevailed;

8b And waiting hosts cry unto you that live, continually, saying, How long do ye forget our prison house of darkness, and regard not us who perish continually?

8c Therefore, I have remembered the little flock who have not denied my name, to make them great in my everlasting kingdom, and to give dominion over the dead unto them, saith the Lord.

9a And now let all who are scattered abroad, and all who have robbed me through covetousness, and in tithes and offerings, and all who have neglected to administer in the gospel as I have called them, come, and from this time forward assist my servants who are building a house unto my name, and who are proclaiming my word unto the nations, that they may enjoy this blessing with them;

9b For only they who labor shall receive the reward; and those who labor to build my house, and to proclaim my word, and to establish my kingdom, will I make saviors; and upon mount Zion shall they stand with crowns on their heads.

## Epistles

### SECTION 26

*First Pastoral Epistle of James the Prophet, December 25, 1845*

James J. Strang a Prophet of the most High God and an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, Unto the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints:

I am in continual remembrance of your past works in the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God and of the evils done at the hands of Ungodly men, and I would that you remain no longer ignorant of the refuge that God has appointed you, and follow not after any who usurp the authority of God in the Holy City.

Be not unmindful of the flock who know not the true Shepherd, but are following hirelings among whom are grievous wolves and they bleat like Sheep by day & devour by night. God be praised that some of you have escaped them. I would that none of you go astray but that you all united might follow after the true Shepherd: lest coming short after escaping the first perils you enter not into your rest.

I beseech you brethren that you be not unmindful of the words of the Lord by the mouth of the Prophet Joseph: that you be not deceived, that you receive not the teachings of any that come before you as revelations and commandments, except they come in at the gate and be ordained according to the command of God, (D.& C. Sec. 14, p2.)

I wist ye are not ignorant of the office and place of the Prophet Joseph, that he was an Elder and an Apostle (D&C, sec. 46, p 1). A Prophet, Seer, Revelator and Translator called to go before the church as Moses went before Israel, (D & C, sec.3, p 42 )



Suffer me in all patience to remind you of the Law of the Lord which he revealed unto us aforetime that the place of the Prophet Joseph should be filled by another; (D & C, Sec 14, p1, 2--Sec.11 p 4 last clause; Sec.51, p 2, last clause; Sec. 34 p 2) that the appointment of his successor is by revelation from God: (D & C, sec. 5 p 6--Sec. 11, p 4 and through Joseph only could that appointment be made, (D & C, Sec. 14 p 2--Sec. 84 p 2 ).

For it is said in one place that if his gift be taken from him, he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead; and in another place it is said, if he abide not in me another will I plant in his stead. At the organization of the High Council of the Church it was written, that the President of the Church who is also President of the Council is appointed by revelation. Finally it is said I have given unto him the keys of the mysteries and revelations which are sealed until I appoint unto them (the Church) another in his stead.

By these testimonies and by many more it doth clearly appear that it was the duty of the Prophet Joseph before his martyrdom to appoint another to fill his place when he should be removed. If he has not done so then have we no evidence that he was a Prophet for what he hath spoken has not come to pass.

The only rational conclusion, which any man can arrive at in view of these testimonies, is that in the order of this Church the Presidency with its several gifts, offices and duties, is perpetual. God having thus organized the Church and power of the Devil having accomplished the Martyrdom of two of the Chief officers, will any saint teach that Satan has changed the order of the Church and abolished those offices which God instituted and by the Martyrdom of the Prophets established a new and better order? I trust not.

I am well aware that Sidney Rigdon claimed his place above the Twelve, and that he sought to do some acts by virtue of his office as one of the first Presidency which were generally very much disapproved of but though he had a perfect right to officiate in his place he had no right to place himself at the head of the Church.

His office as an associate or member of the first Presidency does not constitute him a regular successor to Joseph Smith, the claim in his favor to succeed as the highest surviving officer of the Church, not being a claim of an appointment of God by revelation through Joseph Smith, to fill his place, which is the only form of appointment known to the law of God.

I am aware also that the Twelve claim in their first Apostolic letter after the death of Joseph (Letter of Brigham Young, Aug. 15, 1844 in the Times and Seasons

of that date) to preside over and dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world. And they emphatically charge us let no man presume for a moment that another will fill his place (Joseph's). Thus they assume to abolish the first Presidency of the Church and usurp its duties to themselves.

This claim however is not only utterly unsupported by any one testimony but is in many points directly contrary to the word of God. The Twelve are a traveling and not a local or general High Council and though they are required to build up the Church and regulate all the affairs thereof in all nations they are to do so expressly under the direction of the Presidency of the Church agreeable to the institution of Heaven. (D & C. Sec. 3 p 12) They hold the keys of the opening of the Gospel to the nations (D & C Sec 3, p 13) but the keys of mysteries and revelations belong to Joseph as first President, Prophet, Seer, and so forth, and to his successors regularly appointed by revelation through him (D & C Sec 5, p 10 – Sec 11, p 4; Sec 14, p 1,2) . The Keys of the Kingdom belong to Joseph, for time and eternity, but still with a regular succession as to the oracles or gift of receiving revelation for the Church. (D & C, Sec 84, p 2)--The Melchizedek priesthood by its presidency holds the keys of ordinances and Spiritual blessings. (D & C Sec 3, p 9; Sec 3, p 31) And in all these things the Twelve are without power, their duties being to open the preaching of the Gospel.

Moreover it can not be that the Twelve should dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world, because they not only are under the direction of the first Presidency but the High Council is above them and they are amenable to it. "The most important business of the Church and the most difficult cases of the Church in as much as there is not satisfaction upon the decision of the Bishop or Judges it shall be handed over and Carried up to the Council of the Church before the Presidency of the High Priesthood; and the Presidency of the Council of the High Priesthood shall have power to call other High Priests even Twelve to assist as Counselors; and thus the Presidency of the High Priesthood shall have power to decide upon testimony according to the laws of the Church. And, after this decision it shall be had in remembrance no more before the Lord, for this is the highest Counsel of the Church of God and a final decision upon controversies in spiritual matters, (D & C Sec. 3 p 35) There is not any person belonging to the Church who is exempt from this Counsel of the Church. (Do p 36 Sec also Sec. 5 p 13)

Upon what pretense is this claim of the Twelve founded? Upon the trial of Sidney Rigdon, they took pains to state it as strongly as possible and they make out

no more than this. That when Joseph Smith was candidate for President of the United State and knew by the Spirit that some great thing was to happen but did not know what it was he gave them an endowment of ordinances, (not the oracles, ) and told them that on their shoulders would rest the responsibility. (See trial of S. Rigdon, Times and Seasons Sept. 15th 1844, page 641, remarks of Orson Hyde.) These ordinances are intended for the whole Church, men, women and children. Will they all have power to dictate all the affairs of the Church in all the world then? If not, how do these ordinances give the Apostles that power now? If these ordinances gave certain power to some men why not to others?

All the Twelve were not present and did not receive these ordinances. Whence their claim of power? Several persons not of the Twelve were present and received all these ordinances with such of the Twelve as were there. Why are not they included in the favored number? Joseph survived this meeting some months. Why did they not find out that he had resigned his office and evolved its duties on them till after he was dead? If his giving an endowment of ordinances and rolling the responsibility of giving Counsel, etc., upon some twenty-five men with their wives as he commenced a political career, vacated his office and those of his Counselors and superceded the first Presidency and an entire quorum of the Church it is certainly most extraordinary. A very moderate share of common sense or any acquaintance whatever with the laws of the Church accompanied with integrity of heart will reject so preposterous a claim at first blush. The responsibility of leading the Church by good Counsels in proper order, would devolve on a few of its most influential members necessarily whenever Joseph's attention was turned from them, by any means whatever, not in virtue of any offices they might hold that as leading men, - since the death of Joseph they have used that responsibility to lead the Church from the rock of revelation; out of the true order, and from the place of refuge God has appointed unto them. Thus have a few led, sanctioned by the votes of conferences instead of the voice of God, till the destruction which not only lurks in midnight darkness but stalks boldly at noonday is upon them.

The Twelve have never in any known publication claimed either for themselves or any one of their number to be First President of the Church or President of High Priesthood. Their claim is to supercede the First Presidency, put the High Counsel which God has made the Highest Counsel of the Church, (D & C, Sec. 3 p 35) below themselves and put a Bishop over it where God placed a President, ( D & C, Sec. 3 p 9) and finally that Ex-officio as Apostles and not as

Presidents of the High Priesthood they are to hold the keys and powers which devolved on the First Presidency and its Counselors, and to discontinue the offices of Seer, Revelator, and Translation in the Church.

Nothing is more certain than that no law was made at the death of Joseph, or for some years previous, changing the order of the Church or abolishing any of its offices, or quorums. Down to the time of his death it was properly understood by the whole of the Church that he alone received Revelations from God to be taught by way of commandment in the Church. That he and his two associates in the Presidency had the chief administration of the affairs of the Church and that they with the Twelve High Counselors were a court of Judicatory of final resort, in all important cases and that the Twelve Apostles were the Chief traveling Elders under the direction of the Presidency. And the man who during the lifetime of Joseph had said that, the Twelve were at the head of the Church would have been looked upon either as reckless and hair-brained liar or utterly insane. To have held this then was unblushing apostasy. To hold now that they are not so, is equally apostasy with the leaders in Nauvoo; whence is the change? In God or man? Does truth belie itself?

Why should not the place of Joseph be filled by another? Says Brigham Young: because he stands in his own place and always will. (Apostolic Letter Aug. 15, 1844.) But in the same paragraph he also says the Twelve Apostles of this dispensation stand in their own places and always will. Brother Young will not their places be filled by others when they fill the measure of their days. Then why was brother Patton's place filled? Again, Who will be at the head of the Church when the Twelve are all fallen asleep. Will not the High Priests and the Seventies all hold their places? If so shall any one succeed them? Then where will the Priesthood be when the present generation is dead?

But says some one; God promised Joseph that the keys of the Kingdom should never be taken from him in this world, neither in the world to come. Very well, They were never taken from Christ, but his holding them did not prevent Joseph, and in the eternal worlds all who are joint heirs with Jesus Christ will hold them at one and the same time.

Brethren, I exhort you as you look for the coming of the Lord Jesus, follow not after these blinding fables. Set up no more the work of men's hands against the voice of God. Trust not in your own wisdom to improve or alter the Law of God. You that have gone astray return to the order of God's house. Let all the quorums take their proper order as God has established them. Let the President who has

wandered in darkness return to his proper place, which God gave, nor avert that which men may offer. Let the Twelve take their place as a traveling high council with the keys of the opening of the gospel to the nations. Let the High Counselors give counsel and assistance to the Presidency, which has been called to the high and responsible calling of leading the church to peace and happiness and preparing a people for the coming of the Son of God. Let the High Priests teach the law of God unto the people. Let all the Elders learn not to put their faith in some great man and say all is well, but let them buckle on the whole armor of God and stand up bold defenders of truth rather than men.

Now in my weakness and in the infancy of my ministry I call upon you to assist me. It hath pleased God to put it into the heart of Joseph to appoint me to receive mysteries and revelations unto this Church. And he has been faithful unto the vision and voice of God, by sending me his epistle containing the revelation which God gave him, the Lord God confirming the same by sending his Angels unto me to charge me with this ministry in the same hour that Joseph was taken away and by witnessing the same, to the brethren in those wonderful works which the brethren here are ready to testify unto you.

Let not my call to you be in vain. The destroyer has gone forth among you and has prevailed. You are preparing to resign country and houses and lands to him. Many of you are about to leave the bounds of civilization and of men to go into an unexplored wilderness among savages, and in trackless deserts to seek a home in the wilds where the footprint of the white man is not found. The voice of God has not called you to this. His promise has not gone before to prepare a habitation for you. The hearts of the Lamanites are not turned unto you and they will not regard you. When the herd comes, the savages shall pursue. The cloud which surrounds by day shall bewilder, and the pillar of fire by night shall consume and reveal you to the destroyer, and the men in whom you trusted when you rejected the promises of God shall leave you early and not be found of you in your greatest need.

Let the oppressed flee for safety unto Voree and let the gathering of the people be there. Let the evil who have gone to the holy city be rejected and given to the Law. Let the twelve go out and preach the gospel to the nations according to the command of God instead of staying at home as a prominent mark to bring cruel enemies on their brethren. Let the filth of Zion be cleansed and her garments of peace put on. Let neither gun nor sword be lifted in defiance, nor rest be taken upon

arm of flesh, and the city of our God shall be saved and the Temple of his holiness be unpolluted by the hand of the Gentile.

Causeless the curse has not come, and causeless it shall not fall. They that ask justice let them do it. They that cry out against mobs let them abstain from violence. Those who hate persecution let them regard the rights of others. They that preach God and the gospel let them remember the Law and forget not the order which he has revealed and their own mouths proclaimed. Let them not buffet others, for changing the ordinances and breaking the everlasting covenant unless they themselves will abide the word of God.

### AUTHORITIES REFERRED TO IN THE BOOK OF DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

“And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.--S. 14, p.1.

But verily, verily I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, except to appoint another in his stead: and this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments; and this I give unto you, that you may not be deceived: that you may know they are not of me. For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before.--S. 14, p.2.

The power and authority of the higher or Melchizedek priesthood is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church.--S. 3, p. 9

The twelve are a traveling, presiding high council, to officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the presidency of the church, agreeably to the institution of Heaven. S. 3, p. 12.

And again, the duty of the president of the office of the high priesthood is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses. Behold here is wisdom--yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator and a prophet – having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church.--S. 3, p.42.

I have sent forth the fullness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph; and I have given unto him the keys of the mystery of those things which have been

sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world, and the things which shall come from this time until the time of my coming, if he abide in me, and if not, another will I plant in his stead. S. 11. p. 4.

But, behold, verily I say unto thee no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith. Jr. For he receiveth them even as Moses and thou shalt not command him who is at thy hand, and at the head of the church; for I have given him the keys of the mysteries and the revelations which are sealed until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead. S. 51, p. 2.

Verily I say unto you, the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come; nevertheless, through you shall the oracles be given to another, even unto the church.--S. 84, p. 2.

The president of the church, who is also the president of the counsel, is appointed by revelation. S. 5, p. 6.

The president may inquire and obtain the mind of the Lord by revelation. S. 5, p. 10.

The twelve being sent out, holding the keys to open the door by the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and first unto the Gentiles, then to the Jews.--S. 3, p. 13.

Wherefore, it must need be that one be appointed of the high Priesthood; to preside over the priesthood, and he shall be called president of the high priesthood of the church, or in other words, the presiding high priest over the high priesthood, from the same comes the administering of ordinances and blessings upon the church by the laying on of hands.--S. 3, p. 31.

## SECTION 27

*Letter of James from Kirtland, Ohio to the Church at Voree. August 14, 1846*

Dear Brethren and sisters,

I sit down to write a brief account of our work so far. I arrived here in good season, getting in at the opening of conference the 7th. Conference set four days and was well attended, the lower court of the temple being well filled, on the sabbath day. There were four hundred in attendance Saturday. William Preached twice

during the setting and I did four times. Sabbath day I spoke eight hours in my most rapid manner on the order of the church and in a congregation filling a space fifty five feet square there was not one inattentive person and I may safely say there were not five persons who were not convinced of the truth of every position I took. Monday was devoted to the transaction of business.

A set of officers nearly full for the stake were appointed; Lester Brooks was ordained one of the Twelve Apostles. Resolution was passed (with but one dissenting voice) sustaining the true authorities and order of the Church; and a strong mission appointed to England and such arrangements made that they will leave here with sufficient means to go by steam to Europe before the end of the month.

Of the Twelve, Moses Smith and Lester Brooks, of the High Priests, Martin Harris and Hazen Aldrich and several Elders go out. No difficulty was experienced in raising the necessary means and nothing has occurred to mar our joy or in any respect to depress our hopes. We have God in our midst by the strong testimony of His Spirit, we have the house of the Lord and his people for they are of us and we intend to have all the Church property for the benefit of Mother Smith and the poor of the Church.

The Temple here is deeded to Joseph Smith, President of the Church, as sole trustee in trust, and to his successors in the First Presidency forever and we have it in peaceful and undisputed possession. The farm is in possession of a church agent, tenant or something else who thinks to keep possession by disputing the right of everybody who may claim to represent the Church. We have got a Bishop who will be apt to attend to his case.

We remain here over next Sabbath contrary to our original intentions, because the work prospers so well here that we cannot make up our minds to leave it till it is well done up. Some have been baptized here who never before belonged to the Church. And we have won golden opinions of all people around, thus proving the truth of my oft repeated remark that the surest way of having friends is by deserving them, and that when that means failed it was useless to try any other. The few who oppose us are greatly disappointed at the success of our efforts and the numbers and unanimity of our brethren. The Temple is a most splendid edifice, in much better repair than I had any idea of finding it. We intended to make arrangements for building a stone wall around it, and putting it in first rate repair, and thus save something valuable out of the vast sacrifice and toils of the brethren in times gone by. With all the success that has attended the preaching of the gospel by this Church,



there is no peopel who have sacrificed so much, failed so often or made so many abortions. And why? Because they have not kept the Law of the Lord nor been governed by his word. Preaching the true Gospel, God has give them success; but practicing contrary to His law, he has given them judgements.

My thoughts are turned anxiously to Voree, and my prayers go up to God three times a day for her peace. As oft as ye eat bread, I beg you consider if there be any bickerings among you and to remember that though far away, the heart of your prophet is in your midst, his thoughts upon you, and his prayers ascending up to the throne of God for your peace,

Yours in truth, even,

James J. Strang.

## SECTION 28

### PASTORAL LETTER.

From James J. Strang, Prophet of the Most High God, and First President of the Church of Jesus Christ, to all them that believe in God and obey his law throughout the world.

God, who created the earth in days of old, and holdeth it in his hand at the present moment, who taught the fathers, and spoke to the children of men by prophets and apostles; who hath in the last days lifted up his hand to redeem the earth as well as the children of men having in his good pleasure and abundant grace called me to the service of the sanctuary, and the ministry of the new and everlasting covenant, and revealed to me many and glorious things pertaining to the dispensation of the fullness of times, I feel constrained by his spirit to speak to you of the things that God hath shown me, and especially to put you in remembrance of his law and his precepts; desiring that you should become wise in all that God hath revealed and be made perfect by his word.

Blessed and happy are all those who, being reconciled unto God and to his word, and delivered from the dominion of sin and Satan, by obedience to the law of the gospel, remain and abide therein, pressing on towards the fountain of all light and all truth; never content to stop till they become perfect as God our father is perfect. Such is the high privilege offered to the true disciple of Christ in the

covenant which God hath made, and which shall never be broken. In this covenant all the living members of the church may be bound to one another in the unity of the Spirit, and supplied with zeal and strength and courage to do the will of our Heavenly Father, desire, therefore, that all the saints, individually, may participate in the bonds of union, the fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and may not rest satisfied, without knowing for yourselves the things that pertain to the kingdom of God, and that you be no longer conformed to the world, but transformed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the renewing of your minds, and turned from darkness to light. Wait for and patiently receive the word of God, which shall be as a shining light unto you; then will you be enabled to see and to walk in the path of duty.

I charge you that you steadfastly seek to commend your profession of faith by keeping ALL the commandments of God, and truly following him who was meek and lowly in heart. In the exercises of a tender and enlightened conscience, maintain an upright testimony to the purity and intellectuality of his religion, though it be through suffering. Be careful, that neither for the sake of worldly reputation from a love of ease, nor from a fear of being plundered of your possessions, you incur the condemnation conveyed in the words, “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.”

Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together. Be diligent in public instruction; and put off all slothfulness in family devotions and secret prayer. Subject yourselves frequently to an honest self examination in the light of God’s word, remembering that God’s law by which he judges both the living and the dead is a law of perfect truth, and admits of no concealment. If you are hereby made sensible of manifold transgressions and of cause for humiliation, you will value more highly the principles and the ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and will rejoice exceedingly that the shepherd and bishop of our souls speaketh unto God, and is a minister and a high priest in his tabernacle, by an everlasting and unchanging priesthood, made not without an oath.

In the present state of society, with the strong disposition generally manifested to speak evil of and persecute the saints, it is especially incumbent upon all to carefully watch their varied engagements in life. In conducting your pecuniary affairs whether in agriculture or trade, or as professional men, and in the investment

of your property scrupulously avoid doing anything that may compromise your Christian testimonies, or lessen their force on the minds of unbelievers. Maintain plain dealing and strict integrity with all men, treating them with respect and courtesy, and at the same time showing that your first concern is to lay up treasure in heaven. It is especially incumbent on you that you enter not upon the manufacture of, or trade in intoxicating liquors, or other things used principally for immoral or vicious purposes, and that you obtain no inheritances, except at places where God has called the saints to gather; for where your treasure is there will your hearts be; and if ye neglect these sayings the day of your redemption approacheth not.

“The friendship of the world is enmity with God.” Therefore in fulfilling your duties as citizens, be cautious how you seize on any occasion which may occur to serve the public in a civil capacity as a public officer. Forget not that your being thus engaged may bring, not only the eyes, but possibly the indignation and hatred of the unconverted upon you. When I consider the seductive influences of popularity, and the self-satisfaction consequent upon successful efforts of the intellectual powers, even in a good cause, I feel bound with affectionate earnestness to warn you against taking an undue part in the many exciting movements of the present day. It is our duty to aid, as far as in us lies, in lessening the amount of vice, ignorance and misery; but be especially watchful that you do not engage in any such work merely for applause and public notice, lest thereby you mar the work of God in your hearts, interfere with your duties in the church, and bring down on yourself and brethren that spirit of persecution which a less prominent station might avoid.

Still more earnestly do I warn and admonish you against taking part in the wars and fighting's of the nations of the earth. In the present war between the United States and Mexico, where our own country is pursuing successful conquest of an enemy, at whose hand she has suffered many injuries, long and unredressed, the occasion may seem to justify a belligerent position; but it should not be forgotten that God has not decreed the war, and its conquests are still but added to the stronger of the oppressive. In this nation saints are persecuted and slain, and all manner of evil is spoken against them for righteousness sake. They have been robbed and plundered, and the powers that be have winked at it. They have been exiled from an entire state. Their complaints were laid at the feet of the judge, and he would not hear them; then they laid them at the feet of the governor, and he refused them redress; finally the Prophet Joseph, his Counselor Sidney, and Gen. Robert D. Foster, an high priest, went to Washington, and laid their complaints at the feet of the

President and in the halls of Congress and were told that they could do nothing for them. There they bore a faithful testimony, and have become witnesses at the judgment seat of God, who hath sworn that he will “vex the nation.” So though God uses this nation to chastise the Mexicans for all their wickedness and their high-handed oppressions of the seed of Joseph (as he used Babylon to chastise Israel in days of old) yet the people whom they conquer shall be as poison in the veins of the nation, and the spoils of conquest shall be the seed of future wars. Apparent success shall end in destruction unless they make speed to put off their own sins; Since this faithful testimony was before the prophet had been slain for the testimony which he bore in a public prison, in charge of public officers, and no effort has been made to bring the murderers to justice. Beneath the altar of God he cries continually, “How long, O Lord, Holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on those that dwell on the earth.” And in the end of their probation God is waiting on the nation that they may “turn unto him, and repent of all their evil deeds, and no more slay the prophets, but hearken unto them;” and if they do it not, his fierce anger shall fall upon them and all that are joined with them. Therefore as you give your testimonies against wars and fighting’s see that you engage not in them, and suffer a curse with those that make them.

It is meet also that the Saints shall not mix up in the turmoil of politics. It is preferable that you take no part even in elections in ordinary cases, leaving all such matters to others. But while you thus leave both the making and the administration of the laws to others, scrupulously avoid breaking them; “for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land; wherefore be subject to the powers that be, until He reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet. Behold the laws which ye have received from my hand, are the laws of the church; and in this light ye shall hold them forth. Behold here is wisdom. -- D. & C. sec. 18, p.5.

Finally, brethren, give no heed to backbiters and tale bearers, especially those who are accusers of their brethren. But remembering that as there have been apostates, false teachers, and those who bear false witness and speak evil of things they understand not in all ages of the world, so there shall be until the coming of Christ in flaming fire to take vengeance on all who know not God.

Be steadfast in every good work, not driven about by every rumor. The grace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Accept this sincere greeting and testimony from your fellow-servant.

James J. Strang.

## SECTION 29

*An Epistle of James J. Strang, the Prophet, from Voree, August 8th, 1847 to the Conference of St. Clair.*

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS OF THE ST. CLAIR CONFERENCE :-

I have just received from you the proceedings of your body at its meeting the 16th of July last, and have read with painful interest your third resolution wherein you express your cordial concurrence in my measures by which you are at liberty to neglect the gathering, and remain wherever you choose throughout the United States.-- As an individual, I claim no right to meddle with these matters.--But as a minister of the will and purposes of God, if any one has ever understood me to teach that the law of gathering was not binding on all the SAINTS, or has inferred any such thing from any measures of mine, I bid him to be undeceived from this moment. If I have ever countenanced such an idea, may God forgive me. Many have applied to me for advice in their individual cases as to the time and place of gathering, and I habitually advise them not to waste and leave their substance for the purpose of gathering in haste.--But I hold that every man is bound to gather at one of the stakes of Zion, as soon as he can bring his family and his possessions. And I can truly say that the saints who are waiting to sell farms and houses for a better price, are generally sacrificing twice as much by their neglect to gather as they are, hoping to save by their delays. Hundreds are holding on to farms in the northern States and Canada for a better price than any one now will give, when there are thousands of acres of better land in the Beaver Islands ready cleared, waiting to be possessed "without money and without price."- When they have stayed behind a year or two, and perhaps saved, and more likely lost a hundred or two hundred dollars, they will have to go up and take their inheritance in the wood country, like the sons of Joseph of old. This I believe a fair statement of the general facts, and I wish individuals to make the application to their several circumstances.

But remember that by the mouth of prophets and apostles, both of ancient and modern times, all the saints must gather, and the time has come. Not only are the

house of Jacob called, but "strangers (gentiles by blood) shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob."

This dispensation commenced with the revelation of the gospel, by the ministration of angels, to be preached unto every nation, kindred, tongue and people that dwell on the earth. The Almighty hath decreed that, during the reign of those kings who hold divided sway over the parts of the old Roman empire, HE will "set up A KINGDOM which shall NEVER BE DESTROYED; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall STAND FOREVER" (Dan. 2:44). For this very purpose was the dispensation revealed, that God might lead Israel, as he did in times of old by the mouth of prophets; that he might make his covenants with the spiritual Israel as he did with the natural Israel, who stood before the Lord their God with their captains of their tribes, their elders, their officers, with all the men of Israel, their wives, their little ones and the stranger that was in their camp, from the hewer of their wood to the drawer of their wa-ter; that they might enter into covenant with the Lord their God, and into his oath which he made with them; (Deut. 29:10-12) that thereby he might establish his own kingdom in place of the kingdoms of the world, and might bring in the rest of God and establish everlasting righteousness. The beginning of this kingdom is as a little stone cut out without hands (Dan. 2:34-45). The next grand event is the sitting of the judgment upon the little horn which spake great words against the Most High, and wore out the saints of the Most High (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20-21, 24-26). ---Which is the same power afterwards spoken of as the MAN OF SIN and the SON OF PERDITION. (2 Thes. 2:3-4, 8). And again, as A BEAST which made war with the saints, and OVERCAME them. (Rev. 13:1-9). And as MYSTERY BABYLON the great, the MOTHER of HARLOTS and the abominations of the earth. (Rev. 17:5-6). Who made war with the saints and overcame, so that she destroyed the church of the FORMER DAY SAINTS off from the face of the whole earth (Rev. 13:5-8; 16:6). Therefore is the cry from heaven, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.- Rev. 18:4-5. For Christ shall sit upon the throne of his father David. Luke 1:32; Isa. 9:7.

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the king-dom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Dan. 7:27. And the earth shall be reaped as with a sickle and the wrath of God shall

be poured out upon wicked men with the fierceness of his fury. Rev. 14:9-11, 15, 19; Rev. 18.

Let me warn you that the time draws near. Prophetic events are crowding close upon one another. The Prophet Joseph has warned you that these things shall happen in this generation. Come up to the places God has appointed; for the Lord delayeth not his coming; and it shall be as a thief, when you look not for it.

JAMES J. STRANG

## SECTION 30

*A Pastoral Letter of the Prophet James J. Strang written February 3, 1848.*

JAMES J. STRANG. an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a Prophet of Almighty God, to the Churches in all the world, and to all the Saints scattered abroad, Greeting!

For as much as it hath pleased God to reserve unto himself a people to serve him in these times, when the whole world is sunk in wickedness, and the fullness of the Gentiles is very nearly come in, and the time is near that God will pour out his wrath on them without measure, it behooves us that we commune oft with one another, and communicate spiritual treasures, such as God bestows upon us: and especially that we gather together and strengthen one another's hand, lest we be overcome of Satan and perish in the destruction of the ungodly. I am more impressed to address you now, because when iniquity is pouring forth among the Gentiles without measure the church has not altogether escaped from the inevitable consequence of too great a conformity to the world: except so far as influenced and changed by gospel principles, mankind are much the same in all countries and all ages. And if we do not PRACTICALLY conform to gospel principle, their influence is lost on us. Though men may subscribe to and teach gospel principles all their lives, yet unless they conform thereto in the transaction of our common intercourse with men their influence will be directly lost upon us. And the same consequence which has fallen upon the Gentile world in consequence of their corrupt systems, will also befall the saints if they continue therein. Of this truth the history of the last few years has furnished us many sad examples.

There has been much speculation among men as to the cause of the great falling away in the church during the last four years. It has been attributed to a great variety of different causes, none of which are sufficient to produce so general corruption and such widespread ruin. But there is one unnamed cause, abundantly equal to the production of such results, which remains to this day, still active and doing its work. So long as the saints conform in all things to Gentile usages and customs, so long they must expect to share the fate of those they thus imitate. And the poverty, suffering and sin which are widespread throughout the earth, as the consequence of speculation, swindling and the most unblushing oppression of the poor and needy, cannot be escaped among the saints while they do these things. Let us now try to make our religion a reality. The time has come that the saints must practice their religion and profess their faith. and he that will not do it will be cut off from them. The same causes under like circumstances cannot fail to produce like effects. And as the Gentile social system has produced poverty, want and crime in all the world, in the face of the greatest improvements in the science of agriculture and the mechanic arts, so that in countries where machinery, steam and water do the work of millions of men there is a real want of both food and clothing, we cannot flatter ourselves that while we pursue the same course we can escape a still greater amount of suffering, beginning in poverty, as most of us do.

I have been constrained by the most obvious signs of the times to look over the world and see if there was anything in the state of the nations to justify the oft repeated assertion that the Lord delayeth His coming. Again, I have turned my thoughts inwardly, to contemplate the things which God has revealed relative to these days: and as the servant of God set upon the walls of Zion to watch, I admonish you to come out of Babylon and separate yourselves from her uncleanness. For the day of God's wrath upon her is near, and the time is at hand when his vengeance will be poured out.

The earth presents to us a most unhappy picture. The United States is engaged in a most bloody war against the most powerful sister republic which she has on the earth. This war she has waged without the authority of God, and for causes very far from commensurate to the blood she has shed or the misery she has inflicted. And passing by the nature of the cause (for I will not pretend that this war is causeless) there is good reason, from what God has said, to believe that the greatest portion of its evils will fall on those who have waged it. In the period of less than two years that has elapsed since its commencement, with the very small force engaged, the loss



of life has been not less than ten thousand Americans, and probably three times that number of Mexicans. And the hatred, blood-thirstiness, and passion for violence it is engendering, will remain through generations to come, the consequences of men's corruptions and the instruments of God's wrath upon the nations. Whatever may be the future fate of Mexico, she is practically denationalized. Yet every object professedly sought by the war is further off than at the beginning. Unceasing hostility and the desolation and waste of cities, towns and provinces will follow thick in the future history of the daughter of Babylon, and pestilence and famine will soon commence their work, as they have already in the old world.

So, too, though Europe is not convulsed with any general war, the elements of disorder and destruction are everywhere active. The British Empire, which has by her policy and arms for a long time held sway throughout the earth, is just beginning to crumble to dust. A little territory of the extent of a small State, she has extended her dominion throughout the sea and to the four quarters of the earth. The sun never sets on her empire. The reveille on her legions beats time to the hours as the earth rolls round. The terror of her arms has carried desolation into every country on the face of the earth, and the bones of her sons who have fallen in her wars lie bleaching in the sun forever. So omnipresent has been her power that neither wilderness, mountain or island sufficed to hide the refugee from the emissaries of her oppression. The very name of Britain has become a terror to the most secluded and savage tribes. And with a mechanical power in actual use equal to the labor of one half the human race, the fifteen or sixteen millions of inhabitants of England are now in a state of destitution bordering on starvation. A majority of the people are real paupers, dependent on public and private charities for the bread that preserves life. And with the immense wealth and power of the nation. it has not the ability to furnish bread to fill the mouths of starvation.

France, Germany, Poland, Hungary and provinces of other countries of Europe have suffered for want of food. And this not because there is any lack of men to work the lands, not because there is a lack of skill or any indisposition to work, but because the established order of things makes some men drones and others swindlers: and the habit of individual spunging and swindling induces those habits in nations. And the loss of that fellow-feeling among men which is necessary to heartily loving our neighbors as ourselves and doing as we would be done by is so general and pervasive in its influence, that few men ever think of consulting the interest and general good of mankind in any of their undertakings or avocations.

And the man whose entire income is derived from the labors of others, without making any real return, and, consequently, who in a moral religious view lives by mere swindling and robbery, is no less respected in society than those who are engaged in producing that which is necessary for the use of man.

Such are the consequences of the Gentile social system, under the most favorable circumstances. The examples I have named can be found in kind wherever man is, differing only in degree as the system has been more or less expanded. So entirely have they carried out the system of setting man against man, that the very commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" has been struck out of the decalogue, and men have forgotten that God has engraved it on stone as a perpetual memorial against this ungodly generation. The selfishness engendered in all the intercourse of men is the fruitful cause of national wars and individual sufferings. The affairs of men have been so regulated, and the institutions established among them are of such kind and nature as to set man against his fellow man, and make it the interest of everyone to injure others. While the interest of man is sought in the injury of his neighbor, it is vain to hope that men will do to others as they would that others should do to them. And though we may go forth proclaiming gospel brotherhood and gospel equality from year to year, yet so long as we practice on the same system which has produced all these evils among the Gentiles, so long we must suffer them among ourselves. It is vain to talk about or to hope for the fullness of the spirit of God, or the establishment of His kingdom, if we will not make our religion a practical reality, by doing the things we teach.

The doctrine of the equality of the saints in their temporal things was taught in the beginning of the church. Such an equality has been the hope of the poor and the virtuous from the commencement of the gathering. As early as January, 1831, the word of the Lord came by His prophet showing by parable the justice of equality among the children of the kingdom; (1835 D.C. 12:5; Utah D&C 38:21-26; RLDS D&C 38:5) and adds "BE ONE: if ye are not one, ye are NONE OF MINE." A most thrilling ad-monition is also given that the cry of the poor has ascended up to God. (id. 4.) and that the enemy in secret chambers sought their lives, and in consequence thereof the Lord said, "ye hear of wars in far countries, and ye say there will soon be wars in far countries, but ye know not the hearts of them in your OWN LAND; wherefore treasure up wisdom in your bosoms, lest the wickedness of men REVEAL these things to you WITH A VOICE LOUDER than that which SHALL SHAKE THE EARTH." (1835 D&C 12:4-6; ULDS D&C 38:13-30; RLDS D&C 38:4-6)

This revelation by the wickedness of wicked men has been made so often, that the saints ought now to seek to obey God rather than to follow their own devices. As the saints learned not wisdom by what they heard, will they also refuse to learn by what they suffer? When God requires us to make any sacrifice to His cause, He requires a willing sacrifice. But if we give not willingly, He will not suffer us to possess what He requires. When the church went up to Missouri they went under a special command to consecrate their property, that all might be made equal. This command was never kept: yet they did not keep that which they refused to consecrate. Because the rich refused to make the poor rich with them, their enemies made them poor with the poor. Together were they driven out in destitution. From that time to this they have been driven from city to city, and from country to country: constantly going out robbed and plundered of that which they have greedily kept back from the Lord. Saints, will you that these things shall always be?

In February, 1831, less than one year after the organization of the church, a command was given that the saints consecrate their property for the poor, by a deed which could not be broken: receiving their inheritances according to their several wants, and requiring them to put all their surplus production from time to time into a common storehouse, and receive supplies of what they lack from it. (1835 D&C 13:8, 10-12; ULDS D&C 42:29-36, 40-47; RLDS D&C 42:8, 10-12) In May, 1831, those who had so consecrated their substances, are commanded to organize themselves that they may be alike and RECEIVE ALIKE, and have a common storehouse. (1835 D&C 23:2; ULDS D&C 52:7-9; RLDS D&C 51:2) In August, the same year, Martin Harris and all who were going up to Zion were commanded to make this consecration, to purchase lands in Zion for the saints. (1835 D&C 18:6-7, 10-12; ULDS D&C 58:24-37, 49-56; RLDS D&C 58:6-7, 10-12). In November, of the same year. the Lord said, "in your TEMPORAL THINGS you SHALL BE EQUAL, and this NOT GRUDGINGLY, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the SPIRIT shall be withheld. Now this commandment I give unto my servants for their benefit while they remain, for a manifestation of my blessings on their heads, and for a reward of their diligence; and for their SECURITY for FOOD and for RAIMENT, for an INHERITANCE; for HOUSES and for LANDS, in whatsoever circumstances I the Lord shall place them, and withersoever I the Lord shall send them." (1835 D&C 26:3-4; ULDS D&C 70:9-18; RLDS D&C 70:3-4)

In the succeeding years the ancient order established by revelation of God in the antediluvian world was again revealed as the order of the church for an

EVERLASTING ORDER, and with many other precepts and commandments the following were received:-- 1835 D&C 75:1-3; ULDS D&C 78:1-16; RLDS D&C 77:1-3) "Verily I say unto you, the time has come, and is now at hand, and behold, and lo, it must needs be that there be an organization of My people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor of My people, both in this place and in the land of Zion, or in other words, the city of Enoch, for a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto My church, to advance the cause which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven, that you may be equal in the bands of heavenly things, yea and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things; for if ye are not equal in earthly things, ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things: for if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.

"And now, verily thus saith the Lord, it is expedient that all things be done unto My glory; wherefore a commandment I give unto you, to prepare and organize yourselves by a bond or everlasting covenant that cannot be broken.

"And he who breaketh it shall lose his office and standing in the church, and shall be delivered over to the buffetings of satan until the day of redemption. Behold this is the preparation wherewith I prepare you, and the foundation, and the ensample, which I give unto you whereby you may accomplish the commandments which are given you, that through My providence, notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, that the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world, that you may come up unto the crown prepared for you, and be made rulers over many kingdoms, saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Zion."

(1835 D&C 86:4-5; ULDS D&C 82:11-21; RLDS D&C 81:4-5) "It is expedient for My servant Alam and Ahashdah, Mahalaleel and Pelagoram, and My servant Gazelam, and Horah, and Olihah, and Shalemanasseh, and Mehemson, to be bound together by a bond and covenant that cannot be broken by transgression except judgment shall immediately follow, in your several stewardships, to manage the affairs of the poor, and all things pertaining to the bishopric both in the land of Zion, and in the land of Shinehah; therefore I give unto you this commandment, that ye bind yourselves by this covenant, and it shall be done according to the laws of the Lord. Behold here is wisdom, also, in Me, for your good. And you are to be EQUAL or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of

managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and his needs, inasmuch as his wants are just: and all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents: yea, even a hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the COMMON PROPERTY of the whole church, every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God."

"This order I have appointed to be an everlasting order unto you and unto your successors. inasmuch as you sin not."

(1835 D&C 98:1-3, 10-12; ULDS D&C 104:1-23, 54-77; RLDS D&C 101:1-3, 10-12) "Verily I say unto you My friends. I give unto you counsel and a commandment, concerning all the properties which belong to the order, which I commanded to be organized and established, to be a united order, and an everlasting order for the benefit of my church, and for the salvation of men until I come, with promise immutable and unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded were faithful, they should be blessed with a multiplicity of blessings: but inasmuch as they were not faithful, they were nigh unto cursing. Therefore inasmuch as some of my servants have not kept the commandment, but have broken the covenant, by covetousness and with feigned words, I have cursed them with a very sore and grievous curse: for I the Lord have decreed in my heart, that inasmuch as any man, belonging to the order, shall be found a transgressor: or, in other words, shall break the covenant with which ye are bound, he shall be cursed in his life, and shall be trodden down by whom I will.

"A commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves, and appoint every man his stewardship, that every man may give an account unto Me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him: for it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as stewards over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and builded the earth as a very handy work: and ALL things therein are MINE: and it is my purpose to PROVIDE for my SAINTS for ALL THINGS ARE MINE: but it must needs be done in mine own way: and behold this is the way, that I the Lord have decreed to provide for my saints: that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made LOW; for the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare, yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves. Therefore if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not

his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor, and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

"Let all things be done according to counsel of the order, and united consent, or VOICE of the ORDER.

"And again, a commandment I give unto you concerning your stewardship which I have appointed unto you: behold ALL THESE PROPERTIES ARE MINE, or else your faith is vain, and ye are found hypocrites, and the covenants which ye have made unto me are broken: and if the PROPERTIES are MINE then ye are STEWARDS, otherwise ye are no STEWARDS. But verily I say unto you, I have appointed unto you to be stewards over mine house, even stewards indeed: and for this purpose I have commanded you to organize yourselves, even to shinelah, (write or publish,) my words, the fullness of my scriptures, the revelations which I have given unto you, and which I shall hereafter, from time to time, give unto you, for the purpose of building up My church and kingdom on the earth, and to prepare My people for the time when I shall dwell with them, which is nigh at hand.

"And ye shall prepare for yourselves a place for a treasury, and con-secrate it unto My name; and ye shall appoint one among you to keep the treasury, and he shall be ordained unto this blessing; and there shall be a seal upon the treasury, and all the sacred things shall be delivered into the treasury, and no man among you shall call it HIS OWN, or any PART of it, for it shall belong to YOU ALL with ONE ACCORD; and I give it unto you from this very hour: and now see to it, that ye go to and make use of the stewardship which I have appointed unto you, exclusive of the sacred things, for the purpose of shinelane, (writing or publishing,) these sacred things, as I have said: and the avails of the sacred things shall be had in the treasury, and a seal shall be upon it, and it shall not be used or taken out of the treasury by any one, neither shall the seal be loosed which shall be placed upon it, only by the voice of the order, or by command.

"And again, there shall be another treasury prepared and a treasurer appointed to keep the treasury, and a seal shall be placed upon it; and all monies that you receive in your stewardships, by improving upon the properties which I have appointed unto you, in houses or in lands, or in cattle, or in all things save it be the holy and sacred writings, which I have reserved unto Myself for holy and sacred purposes, shall be cast into the treasury as fast as you receive moneys by hundreds, or by fifties, or by twenties, or by tens, or by fives; and let not ANY MAN among you say that it is HIS OWN, for it shall not be CALLED HIS, nor any part of it; and

there shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the treasury, only by the VOICE and COMMON CONSENT of the ORDER."

These commandments, though they are more perfect in system than any other whereas recorded, contain no other doctrine than what has always been taught by the gospel and the Melchizedek priesthood. Before Israel went in Egypt each patriarch was the head of a house, consisting in some instances of many thousands of persons, all holding one common estate and inheritance, in the use of which they enjoyed equal benefits. The family of Job could not have been less than 10,000 souls: that of Melchizedek was doubtless larger, and Abraham's probably numbered 4,000, ALL HEIRS WITH HIM of the promise of the land of Canaan for a perpetual inheritance. Gen. 17:7-13. Israel, when they entered into the land of Canaan, received their inheritances by families, not by individuals, and usually each family received a city and the country around extending halfway to the next city for its possession. During the ministry of Christ, He and the chief of His disciples had no separate property, but Judas, one of the twelve, was treasurer and purveyor for the whole. And though doubtless some individual disciples retained their estates, yet when a certain rich young man came inquiring what he should do to inherit eternal life, Christ told him to "sell what he had and give to the poor," and follow him. Matt. 19:21. And about a year after the crucifixion of Christ, when the church was receiving great accessions, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had ALL THINGS COMMON: neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of houses or lands, sold them and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." Acts 4:32, 34, 35.

Finally, it pleased the Lord, when he chose me to be the shepherd of the flock, as he chose David to be king of Israel, not from among princes and rulers, but from the field, to show me still more clearly by many visions and revelations the true order for establishing judgment and justice, exalting the poor and delivering the needy. The work was once begun both in Kirtland and Zion, but failed by means of a multitude of transgressions. And from that time till this the church has not ceased to be scourged by her enemies, nor will she until she obeys this commandment. So general was the feeling in favor of the common stock and equality at the time the church was finally driven from Missouri, that Joseph wrote from prison to prevent it, telling them that though the principle was correct they had no authority to do the

act, and must wait until God gave commandment. In His wisdom He has withheld the commandment till the great falling away is past.

The time has now come. The command went forth in July, 1846. (See Voree Herald, No. 7.) The work is begun, and everything is ready for those who will come up to the help of the Lord, against those who have trodden down his children and had no compassion on the needy and the oppressed. The organization (including children) now consists of sixty persons, and applications for admission are being constantly received. The entire system is founded on UNION, EQUALITY, and a strict regard to the LAW of GOD and the DISCIPLINE of the CHURCH. The association owns a farm of five hundred and sixty acres of land, four hundred acres of which might be cropped the coming season, and considering soil, water, salubrity and location, probably the very best in Wisconsin: several good stone buildings, a valuable water power and a property in all worth not less than \$11,000, on which they owe debts a very little over three thousand. This property lies in, and in the immediate vicinity of Voree, is beautifully located, very productive and entirely healthy.

This we offer to the saints as the home of the poor and the asylum of the oppressed. Here we propose to share each other's joys, and each other's sorrows; each other's toils, and each other's possessions: and to teach mankind that LOVE and TRUTH WINS WITH peace and sweetness, what FORCE and FRAUD labors in vain to COMPEL. Here we intend to gather a COMMUNITY WHO SHALL BE EQUAL IN THEIR TEMPORAL THINGS: WHO SHALL DO TO OTHERS AS THEY WOULD BE DONE BY: AND WHO SHALL LOVE THEIR NEIGHBORS AS THEMSELVES. HERE SALVATION SHALL BE PRESENT, and the GOSPEL A PRACTICED REALITY. HERE PEACE SHALL REIGN.

The Lord and His saints say come. Let him that heareth say come. He that is poor and needy, let him come. Yea, come buy food, raiment and habitation, a perpetual inheritance in Zion, without money and without price. And whosoever will, let him come and possess the land with us freely.  
JAMES J. STRANG.

## SECTION 31

*A Pastoral Letter of the Prophet James J. Strang, written May 1, 1848.*



## THE TRUE SHEPHERD TO THE SAINTS EMIGRATING FROM GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND TO AMERICA--GREETING :---

God, who in days of old spoke on divers occasions and in many ways to the house of Israel by the prophets, and afterwards to all the earth by his son, whom he made ruler over all things, last of all in these days restored the gospel to the earth by the ministry of angels, and the priesthood which he conferred on the prophet Joseph by their hands; and has thereby established a church by an everlasting and unchanging order, conferring upon that priesthood the keys of the kingdom of God, and of the rest which he has reserved to the saints, and of everlasting righteousness.

Apostles, High Priests, and Elders have received from the highest authority of this priesthood mission and commandments to visit you, and in the name of the God of all the earth to preach the gospel unto you, and have, in virtue of the jurisdiction thus obtained, taught you the law of the gospel, and inducted you into the household of faith. From the first proclamation of the gospel in Great Britain you were taught that God spoke now, as in days of old, by the mouth of prophets, and that a priesthood elected and chosen by KINGS, MAGISTRATES, or PEOPLE, was unauthorized, and its administrations would not avail to salvation. Truly have they cried out to you that all your administrations by a man-made priesthood, whether they be Catholics, Episcopalians, or Protestants were vain, and but a mockery of God's ordinances. And that unless men are truly called by revelation of God, and set apart to the ministry by the hands of those who were thus called and set apart, they cannot act as ministers and priests of the true church.

I rejoice that so many of you have received these truths, and laid hold on salvation. And it would be serious cause of grief, if, after all the buffetings and persecutions you have endured for receiving the faith, and the perils you have passed through in coming to this country, you should still throw yourselves under the authority of a mere MAN-MADE priesthood, and trust your salvation to the administrations of men merely elected by the people. Joseph, our martyred prophet, became a prophet and the first and presiding elder of the church of God by revelation of God and the ordination of angels. (1835 D.C. 14:2) And what authority and ceremonies it took to make him a prophet and the first and presiding elder, the same authority and ceremonies it would also take to confer the same office and priesthood on anyone to stand in his place.

As much as has been said on this subject, and little to the purpose, I beg leave to call to your minds particularly the principles involved in the ordination of a prophet to stand at the head of a dispensation. When Moses received the dispensation of Israel, Jethro, and probably many others, were priests of the true God. But as Moses was called to a higher authority than any of them possessed, the Lord himself spoke to Moses to give him the authority; and though we are not expressly told that he was ordained by the hand of angels, yet we are plainly told that the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and are left to infer that he appeared for some rational purpose. Ex. 3:1-12.

When Christ received the dispensation of the gospel, though he found John the Baptist, a priest after the order of Aaron, yet he could not receive the priesthood from him, but had a dispensation and a higher priesthood immediately from God, who made him a high priest by his oath. For when John baptized him, the voice of God was heard, saying, "This is my Son, hear ye him;" and a messenger from heaven descended on his head and designated him as the Messiah. So likewise, when the dispensation of the fullness of times was committed to Joseph, God not only spoke to him and gave him commandments by his voice, and sent also his angels to ordain him to the priesthood which they also had before held. (1835 D.C. 50:2, 3)

When Moses failed to make Israel a nation of priests unto God, and brought them in under the law of curse, making one tribe only priests to all the rest, and God saw fit to take away the most holy priesthood, Moses, by revelation of God, ordained Joshua to an inferior species of priesthood. So Christ, when he was rejected as the Messiah, the king of the Jews, and the offer of deliverance to Israel was withdrawn, conferred on Peter the keys of the dispensation, with the power of binding and loosing both on earth and in heaven, and of remitting and retaining sins. In each of these cases the authority conferred was less than that of him who conferred it. Two persons could not stand at the same time holding the authority which God conferred on Moses. Consequently Moses could not ordain anyone to it. But he put part of his honor on Joshua. Two persons could not stand at the same time having the authority of Christ, as king of Israel and head of the gospel dispensation. Consequently Christ did not ordain Peter to the same authority which he held, but to a less. (John 21:15-17.)

Likewise, two persons cannot stand at the head of the dispensation of the fullness of times, holding the keys of mysteries, revelations, and commandments, and consequently Joseph could not in any way ordain or bring anyone into his

authority, but the act of God is necessary to consummate such priesthood. In other words, it requires the same power and the same ordinances to confer that priesthood on the successor to Joseph as it required to confer it on Joseph. And as Joseph was called by revelation, and ordained by angels, so must his successor be. (1835 D.C. 5:60) And, as Joseph was established as the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, it was necessary that the revelation appointing his successor should come through him, because the church are forbidden to receive revelations and commandments from others. And, as this is established as a positive law, no instances are necessary to justify it; but if any were wanting, they might be found in the case of Samuel and Elisha. Samuel succeeded Eli, who fell by wickedness, and the Lord revealed to Eli, and then to Samuel, that Samuel should stand as prophet in his stead. (1 Samuel 3). Elisha succeeded Elijah as a prophet. Elijah abode faithful to God in all things, but many years before he was translated, God had, through him, chosen Elisha to be his successor. (1 Kings 19:16) Yet, after he was translated to the chariot of the Lord, and ceased to be of the earth, he conferred that priesthood on Elisha, which he alone held while he ministered among men. (2 Kings, 2:9-15.)

Joseph, if he had abided in God in all things, would have stood on the earth and at the head of the dispensation at the coming of Christ. When Christ sent forth the fullness of the gospel by him, it was with promise that if Joseph abided in him, the keys of mysteries and revelations (which pertain to earth and not to heaven) should not be taken from him till Christ came. In February, 1831, a new promise was made that if Joseph did not stand, whether taken away or being rejected, he should appoint another in his stead; but with this distinction: that if his priesthood was taken from him he should only have power to appoint another; but if God took him (which he did June 27th, 1844), there was no limit or cutting short of his priesthood while he remained. In 1833, as Joseph had not abided in Christ perfectly, but had committed sin, God said he should give the oracles to another, to the end that they might remain in the church as before. But as Joseph had repented of his sins, God also accepted his offering, and sealed him up to everlasting life by promising him the keys of the kingdom in this world and the world to come. (1835 D.C. 84:1-2) This promise was sure and unconditional; but it was less than the former promise, which was of life everlasting without seeing death. For if he held the keys of mysteries and revelations until Christ came, he would, at the head of all the saints, ascend on high to dwell with him.

So, likewise, no one can be elected to the place which Joseph held, for that would both be contrary to first principles, which require as much authority to place any other in that priesthood as it took to confer it on Joseph, but also contrary to the law which says his gift shall not be conferred on any other except it be through him, (Joseph). But even conceding that one might be elected to stand as First President and prophet, the question returns, by whom shall he be ordain-ed? Not by Apostles, High Priests, or Elders, for all are below him in priesthood, and none can confer higher authority than he possesses. None can ordain to a higher priesthood than he holds. Elders cannot confer the high priesthood, and apostles cannot make prophets with the keys of the dispensation; because, though the priesthood is of the same order, it is higher.

The question returns, Who can ordain? God has answered it. In February, 1831, God said, "He that is ordained of me (God) shall come in at the gate (be appointed by revelation, for that is the gate or lawful place of coming in), and BE ORDAINED AS I HAVE TOLD YOU (Joseph) BEFORE." (1835 D.C. 14:2) So if we can learn what God told Joseph before on this subject, the answer is perfect. In September, 1830, five months before, and only five months after the organization of the church, God said: "I have sent unto you Peter, James, and John (angels), BY WHOM I HAVE ORDAINED YOU, " etc. (1835 D.C. 50:3) Most clear and true, therefore, is it that a prophet of this dispensation cannot be either elected or ordained of man, but must be chosen by revelation and or-dained by angels.

Against this rule, those who wish to pervert the word of God sometimes quote the law concerning the three presiding high priests. (1835 D.C. 3:11) It will be observed, however, that that is not a revelation, but only a law of the church, and cannot change the interpretation of a revelation. 2nd. That those three are not the Presidents of the church, but the Presidents of the high priests.-- For we are told expressly that their necessity grows not out of the organization of the church, but of the priesthood. (1835 D.C. 3:1 & 11) Whereas, the Presidency of the church existed of necessity, before the priesthood was organized at all. 3rd. That they are inferior to the First Presidency in power, for they are only equal with the Twelve, either seventy or a high council of a stake, all of which councils and quorums are inferior to the First Presidency, and subject to it. 4th. These three presiding high priests are chosen by the body and ordained by the church. Whereas, we have shown, both by the letter of the law, and the force of fundamental principles, that the First Presidency cannot be thus chosen and ordained. To say that this law relates to the First

Presidency is equivalent to saying that all the revelations concerning the appointment, ordination, and power of the prophet are false.

It should not be forgotten that for nearly four years past the church has suffered continual perils, and such calamities as never before fell on it. If God has all that time left them without a prophet, there is no hope that he will give them one. And if the power existed in the church to make one (which I have shown does not), it was the last degree of folly not to exercise it. Most truly do I say to you that the only reason why usurpers and apostates are now promising you to organize the church according to the ORIGINAL PATTERN with a First Presidency is because so many have appealed to the law and said, "a church without a prophet is not the church for me." Having no God-made prophet, they are about to offer you one made by themselves. Since you have rejected man-made parsons, bishops, and archbishops, will you accept a man-made prophet?

Brethren, in this appeal to you I have spoken upon principles and not men. Those who say they are apostles but are not, have gone beforehand to you with terrible accusations against me. I shall not retaliate on them by so much as naming their real errors. If they have the authority to lead the church, in spite of all their faults, their authority is good till regularly taken away. On the other hand, if I have not the authority, no matter what the sanctity of my life, I have no right to assume it till it is regularly conferred. I am ready to test these matters by the word of God. Fully persuaded that no man can do me any real or lasting injury but myself, I am content to leave both accusation and defense to others.

As your true Shepherd I invite you to the fold and refuge God has prepared for you. Both at Voree and Beaver Island God has provided for the saints peace, abundance and safety. The saints are gathering in a church with a God-made prophet, and an authorized priesthood, and keeping the law of God, having all their goods and possessions common and wanting nothing. We do not claim authority in virtue of numbers. We have never yet subscribed to the doctrine that the voice of the people is the voice of God, or that men are made prophets by the will of man. We know very well that Christ was rejected by the voice of the people. Truly did he say to the Israel of his day, ye are the children of those that slew the prophets. Moreover the prophet Joseph has given us a full test of those who say they are apostles and are not. Though we will not accuse them, yet we believe the word of God by his prophet will stand, and by that they must fall.

After the saints had gathered to Nauvoo God gave them the following promise:-- 1846 D.C. 103:13. "If ye labor with all your mights, I will consecrate that spot, that it shall be made holy; and if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place. But if they will not hearken unto my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest, because they pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and chatters, and my holy words, which I give unto them.

14. "And it shall come to pass, that if you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfill the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord; for instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation and judgments upon your own heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations which you practice before me, saith the Lord."

That the saints in Nauvoo obeyed faithfully the words of Brigham Young and his associates from the death of Joseph till their final expulsion from that place, and the laws which they gave as the law of God, they themselves have abundantly proved. Heber C. Kimball and others of the Twelve at the April Conference, 1845, and at other times, said they were the most obedient people that ever existed. Why were they removed out of their place? Was it because the arm of God is shortened that he cannot save? Or was it because they obeyed the voice of men whom God did NOT appoint to be their leaders? The promise is express, that if they will obey they shall not be removed, and if they will not obey they shall be cursed. They were removed, and bitterly have they been cursed, for they are plundered, exiled, scattered, and vast numbers of them have perished of exposure and want. The only conclusion to which anyone can arrive, who believes in Joseph, is that they have not followed the leaders whom God appointed, but only such as are appointed by men.

Brethren, will you run the same race? Will you drag the same curses on your heads which have fallen so heavily on them? Will you expose not only yourselves but wives and children to all the perils of wicked men in a waste, desolate wilderness a thousand miles from the utmost verge of civilization, for the sake of having your trust in the arm of flesh, or in a man-made priesthood, departing from the Lord and dwelling in the heath of the desert, and inhabiting the parched places of the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited? (Jer. 17:5-6.) Rather see good, for it has come, and flee from the evil while there is refuge.

Voree, May 2st, 1848. JAMES J. STRANG.

## SECTION 32

### *A TESTIMONY TO THE NATION.*

TO THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE NATION--WE, JAMES J. STRANG, GEORGE J. ADAMS, AND WILLIAM MARKS, PRESIDENTS OF THE CHURCH OF THE SAINTS, APOSTLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND WITNESSES OF HIS NAME UNTO ALL NATIONS, SEND GREETING:---

It is twenty years this day since our brethren, the prophets and saints of God, organized the only church existing, solely by commandment and revelation of God, now on the earth. A few months subsequent to that organization a few of our brethren went up into the western part of Missouri, one of the States of this union, and commenced a settlement there.

Agreeable to a commandment which God gave them, they purchased large quantities of lands of the government of the United States, and paid the full price therefore to the officers of the United States, the ministers of your predecessors in office. Upon these lands our brethren, the saints, made extensive settlements, continually showing themselves the most industrious, peaceable and law-abiding citizens of that section of the country. At the time of which we speak no one among them was accused of any violation of the law, or of a want of attachment to the constitution and government of the United States, or of the state of Missouri.

Notwithstanding these facts, and the legal rights of our brethren, a numerous meeting of citizens of Missouri was held at Independence, in Missouri, which decreed the expulsion of the saints from that part of the State. This meeting issued a manifesto to the public, giving to the world the reasons for banishing from their neighborhood a numerous class of citizens; the entire church of the Latter Day Saints. In giving these reasons they stated that our religious sentiments and domestic habits were incongruous with theirs, and that it was necessary for their happiness that our brethren should leave; and as the grievances of which they complained were not recognized by the laws, and the saints had not violated any existing law whereby they were subject to regular prosecution in the courts, therefore they would take

redress into their own hands, and compel us to leave the country, peaceably if they could, forcibly if they must. This decree was carried out by the expulsion of the saints from Jackson Co., Missouri.

They then settled in various counties on the north side of the Missouri river, but continual collisions took place, till finally they were banished from the State by authority of a mandate issued by Lillburn W. Boggs, acting Governor, distinctly commanding that the saints (in derision called Mormons) be banished from the State, or exterminated. We are perfectly aware that this mandate of the acting Governor was unauthorized by the law, and in violation of the constitution of the State of Missouri. But the Legislature of that State, in failing to impeach the Governor, and by appropriating the money to pay the expense of EXECUTING HIS ORDER, has affirmed and adopted the act as the crime of the State. In accomplishing this expulsion ten thousand persons,, men, women and children, were plundered of their possessions, EXILED FROM THEIR HOMES, and DRIVEN IN DESTITUTION, HUNGER AND WANT, in mid winter, to a distant land, passing much of the way in the midst of HOSTILE FOES, who not only refused them shelter and food, but kept them in continual danger.

Many were separated from their families and incarcerated in prison, whence, after long detention, they escaped only by paying large sums of money to prison keepers, judges and lawyers, as the price of their enlargement. Besides a feeble few, who, after learning that their persecutors were without compassion, were slain while defending their wives, their children and their firesides; eighteen persons, unarmed, and engaged in the worship of God, were murdered unresisting, and in cold blood, in the early part of these persecutions; one of them a mere child, who died mixing together the words of his prayer to God, and his supplication for mercy from his murderers; another, an old man, bowed down with suffering and sorrow, scarred with the wounds he had received fifty-seven years before in defence of American liberty and American independence; all yielding up their lives for the name of Jesus, and the witness of the gospel. Others, at different times, shared the same fate; how many, we know not.

Subsequently the saints settled in great numbers in the State of Illinois, and built up, besides many villages, the city of Nauvoo, at one time the most populous city in that State. At their first settlement they were kindly received; but after building up flourishing towns, be-coming numerous as a religious people, and strong



in their political influence, religious prejudice, political interests and commercial rivalry combined together to destroy them.

On this occasion our persecutors sought to justify their violence by accusing the saints of enormous crimes, and the most astounding corruptions. That these accusations were utterly unfounded is clearly shown by the fact that with courts, jurors and prosecuting officers constantly and assiduously selected from among our persecutors, few of the saints were ever prosecuted on criminal charges, and very few indeed ever convicted.

Nevertheless this persecution was carried on until our fellow servants, the prophets, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, were martyred; the houses of hundreds of the saints burned down before their eyes; the entire community amounting to 25,000 banished from that section of the State, and four millions of dollars worth of property sacrificed.

For all these wrongs the laws and institutions of the country offer us no redress. It is vain to answer that such acts are contrary to law, and that the courts are open to us. There is a law in the land stronger than statutes, more potent than the usages of courts. The will of the masses, however vicious and partial, no matter by what influences produced, has been able TO TRAMPLE ON ALL PRECEDENT, and ride down all law. It has done more. It has produced legislation according to its wishes, in violation of all constitutional securities; and not merely contrary to precedent, but destructive of natural right.

This unrecognized law, found only in the will of the masses, has been enforced in destroying houses, offices and valuable papers of some of the most distinguished citizens of the country, public buildings of various kinds, printing presses and railroads owned by wealthy companies, churches and convents of the most ancient and numerous religious denomination in the country, and to overthrow contracts which had stood the vicissitudes of two hundred years, the ordeal of civil war and national revolution, though defended by the sanctity of constitutional and statute law; usages older than the language we speak; the power of a great State; the wealth that seven generations of thrift had accumulated; and backed by an aristocracy made honorable by deeds of benevolence, justice, patriotism and valor as boundless as the sources of its greatness.

If these cannot resist the power of this new element of national and state government mob law, how shall we? We are aware that our name is cast out as evil, as a kind of apology for the uncounted injuries which have been heaped upon us.

But you will not forget that in early times among all the most polished nations the name christian was looked on as a name for fanaticism and debauchery; that the learned Greeks and victorious Romans held them cannibals, and that, even now, in half the civilized and christian nations democracy is considered synonymous with anarchy and lawlessness; how justly, you can judge.

And if the sanctity of the ancient christian faith, and the greatness of your nation have not protected them from these aspersions, what shall protect us from equal wrongs? We protest against this nearly universal practice of assuming that we are guilty of great crimes, as an excuse for denying us the regular protection of the government in our legal rights. But when we examine the evidence of the truth of these assumptions, they are most conclusively falsified.

Joseph, the martyred prophet, whose bloodstains on the jail at Carthage are as indelible as those of Jesus on the cross, has been arrested thirty-nine times on criminal charges. Thirty nine times he has been tried in the courts of his enemies; many times at the bar of men who advocated his murder. And thirty-eight times, in such courts, at the bar of such men, has he been acquitted.

The only offence of which he was ever convicted is that of unlawful banking, an offence committed with impunity by other men in nearly every State in the union. Nor did he escape conviction by the testimony of his brethren. Such men would stop their ears against it. If this is not a sufficient vindication of him as a law abiding man, no array of facts could be.

That the charge on which he was finally arrested and imprisoned was merely trumped up for the purpose of seizing upon him and detaining him until a convenient time for his destruction, is as clearly proved as any fact whatever in the history of the country.

And when we add that his murderers were indicted, arraigned and acquitted at the instance of their own friends, without any attempt to introduce the necessary evidence against them, and merely for the purpose of interposing a legal bar to their punishment, in some more healthy period of the public mind, we think it will not require argument to convince all mankind that, the State of Illinois has adopted that murder as its own.

There is now in the States of Missouri and Illinois four millions of dollars worth of houses and lands purchased with the money and produced with the skill and industry of our brethren the saints, which they are not permitted to occupy.

To you, as the highest authority known to the land, we appeal for redress. We have not forgotten that there are other tribunals in which causes partially similar in kind, immeasurably less in aggravation, are sometimes examined, perhaps occasionally righted. But these tribunals are closed against us, by the power of that law, already referred to, which is above statute, precedent and right.

Courts, State Legislatures, and State executives are deaf to us. When we speak, they cannot hear. When we ask justice, their faces are turned from us. True, when they do speak, their voice is for us. But it comes after the deed is done, or it is so faintly heard that the lawless do not think it earnest. The forms of law hold us as victims, and the power that is above law overwhelms us. Thus have two of our prophets died in the hands of public officers, and under the destroying protection of a State Governor, personally superintending the proceedings, and no one act of public indignation has rebuked the deed. By every form of judicial proceeding known to the laws of the land, the perpetrators have been legally shielded from the punishment which the law itself denounces against such crimes.

If you tell us (as some of your predecessors told these martyred prophets while they were yet alive) that "you have no power to redress our wrongs," then there is presented to the world the melancholy spectacle of the greatest republic on earth, a Christian nation, acknowledging itself powerless to judge; unable to protect the right; a nation on whose righteousness half the earth rest the hopes of man, confessing that there is a power above the law, riding clown the constitution, which stalks abroad to plunder and banish the citizens, and none to rebuke; murders the unoffending innocent, and none to say, "why do ye so?" which sanctifies its deeds of violence, even in the eyes of religious men, by blackening the fame of the glorious dead, with the name of crimes which in their life time it dared not attempt to prove, even in its own tribunals.

The fact that our brethren are the owners of large tracts of land, purchased of the United States, and secured to us by the name and seat of the President, which they have never sold, and which they are not permitted to occupy, by the powers actually existing, and that our brethren have been banished and murdered, and their persecutors are unrebuked, and positively and legally screened from punishment, is as indelibly stamped on the history of the country as the declaration of independence, or the victory of Buena Vista.

All the inferior powers have been appealed to in vain. Unless you redress these wrongs, must they rest on the nation forever, and bring down the wrath of God on

those who have done, and those who have permitted them? If you fear not God, how will you answer to mankind and to posterity, for such a desecration of republicanism, in a Christian country?

For these wrongs we do not ask a grant of lands, nor a State or Territorial government. We acknowledge that we have had enough of these. We shall never sell the lands of our brethren and ourselves, the inheritance of the martyred and of their children, for new grants of which we are equally liable to be deprived by some new act of violence.

We do not ask compensation in money or land for the blood of the dead, or the persecutions of the living. The lands we have been robbed of, we shall continue to claim for the banished, and for the widows and orphans that murders have made, till the day when the judgment of God shall be revealed on the nation, and his wrath no longer slumbers; and they shall go up and possess it, though the nation ceases.

But these things admonish us that we are not to expect peace or protection in the midst of the people who have done us this iniquity. Both by the commandment of God and from the necessity of our situation, we are seeking a home in a land where religious sects and political parties are far removed from us, a land uninhabited.

We have not been suffered to live with other men. Shall we not be permitted to live alone? God made the earth for all mankind. Of the vast all he has given us a few little islands. They are the work of his hands; not man's. Why should man sell God's work?

We, therefore, the servants of the living God, the fellow servants of the martyred saints, ask you, the President and Congress of the United States, to pass a law giving the consent of the nation that the saints may settle upon and forever occupy all the uninhabited lands of the islands in Lake Michigan, and to cease to sell the same to other persons. And of the people of the United States we ask that as they have not allowed our brethren to remain in peace with them, they will suffer us to remain there separate from them.

We further ask that you, by some public act, condemn in behalf of the nation the martyr-dom of the saints and their exile from some of the States. Unless you do this, will posterity and God hold the nation guiltless of the blood of saints and prophets? What evidence has ever yet been given that the nation sanctions not the deed? How has she washed her hands of this blood?

We further ask that you take such measures, whether constitutional or by a peaceable change of the forms of government, as shall secure redress for these wrongs, and the punishment of the aggressors. Less than this there can be no excuse for doing. The government which cannot or will not prevent such crimes, does not deserve to continue; and it would be distrusting the justice of the Most High to believe he would not destroy it.

As you do good or evil, God reward you.

Written at Buffalo, the 6th day of April, 1850.

JAMES J. STRANG,  
GEORGE J. ADAMS,  
WILLIAM MARKS.

### SECTION 33

*The Martyrdom of the Prophet James J. Strang at the hands of assassins' bullets on June, 1856. The following section appeared in the Northern Islander.*

#### MURDEROUS ASSAULT.

On Monday last the U. S. steamer Michigan entered this harbor at about 1 o'clock, P. M., and was visited by the inhabitants promiscuously during the afternoon.

At about 7 o'clock Capt. McBlair sent a messenger (San Barnard, the Pilot) to Mr. Strang, requesting him to visit him on board. Mr. Strang immediately accompanied the messenger, and just as they were stepping on the bridge leading to the pier in front of F. Johnson & Co.'s store, two assassins approached in the rear, unobserved by either of them, and fired upon Mr. Strang with pistols. The first shot took effect upon the left side of the head, entering a little back of the top of the ear, and rebounding, passed out near the top of the head.

This shot, fired from a horse pistol, brought him down, and he fell on the left side, so that he saw the assassins as they fired the second and third shots from a revolver; both taking effect upon his person, one just below the temple, on the right side of the face, and lodged in the cheek bone; the other on the left side of the spine, near the tenth rib, followed the rib about two inches and a half and lodged.

Mr. Strang recognized in the persons of the assassins Thomas Bedford and Alexander Wentworth. Wentworth had a revolver, and Bedford a home pistol, with which he struck him over the head and face, while lying on the ground. The assassins immediately fled on board the U. S. steamer, with pistols in hand, claiming her protection.

The assault was committed in view of several of the officers and crew from the deck of the steamer, also Dr. H. D. McCulloch, Franklin Johnson, and others, and no effort made to stop it.

Mr. Strang was taken up by a few friends, and some of the officers of the boat, and carried to the house of Messrs. Prindles, where the surgeon of the steamer made an examination of his wounds, and declared recovery hopeless.

Process was taken out for the apprehension of the assassins, and the Sheriff of the county called on Capt. McBlair for their delivery. The Capt. refused to give them up, saying that he would take them to Mackinac, and deliver them into the hands of the civil authorities of the State there.

The steamer left the next day, carrying off all the persons supposed to be complicated in the affair, thus affording military protection to murderers, and overthrowing the sovereignty of civil law.

Hopes are entertained of Mr. Strang's recovery.