

Praying God the Eternal Father to bless you and qualify you for this work to which you are now called, and asking him to preserve you and yours from the hands of all your enemies, and to bring you home in purity, peace and love, we remain,
Your fellow servants in the Lord,

JOSEPH F. SMITH,
JOHN R. WINDER,
ANTHON H. LUND,

First Presidency.

1905 — July 31 — Original letter. Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Previous instructions had been issued by the First Presidency on August 10, 1903, (see earlier in this volume) on "Missionary Classes in Church Schools." This letter continued the program for another year. The two sets of instruction are essentially identical.

1905 — November 13 — *Deseret News* (November 13, 1905); also *Improvement Era* 10:929-943 (October, 1907).

The subject of this official doctrinal interpretation by the First Presidency are two verses (7 & 8) of a revelation (Section 85, Doctrine and Covenants) which in turn was originally part of a letter which Joseph Smith wrote to William Wines Phelps on November 27, 1832.

Joseph Fielding Smith, present Church Historian (1969), has written: "Verses 6, 7 and 8, in this letter as published in the Doctrine and Covenants, have caused no end of needless speculation due to a misunderstanding of what is written. . . .

"There have arisen from time to time men of doubtful intelligence who have laid claim to being the 'one mighty and strong.' Some of these, notwithstanding their limitations of intellect and power of understanding, have succeeded in gathering around them a few followers of like spirit and lack of understanding." (CHMR 1:350 [1953].)

Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of Brigham Young University, has written: "The words in verses 7 and 8 have, over the years, created a veritable storm of discussion, and wide differences of opinion still exist as to their interpretation. . . . In my humble opinion, the vigorous discussions of the past — and even at present — . . . were — and are — veritable tempests in a teapot." (Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium*, pp. 410-411.)

Dr. Russell Rich, of Brigham Young University, a specialist on divergent L.D.S. groups, is of the opinion that little special attention was paid to these two verses from Section 85 and their possible interpretation until the beginning of the twentieth century. It is obvious from the note in the *Improvement Era* for October, 1907, that an inquiry had reached the editor's desk at that time on the correct interpretation of the verses in question. Whether a similar inquiry had reached the First Presidency two years before in 1905 has not been determined.

A Master's thesis at Brigham Young University by Lyle O. Wright entitled "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times" (1963), pp. 27-50, lists and discusses some eighteen principal claimants to the title of being the "One Mighty and Strong." He says (p. 34) that Samuel Eastman was making this claim in 1905.

The statement of the First Presidency of 1905, however, still stands (in 1969) as the official interpretation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of these verses of a revelation given through Joseph Smith in November, 1832.

According to Sidney B. Sperry: "This section [85 of the Doctrine and Covenants] does not appear in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and it first appeared in the 1876 edition of our own *Doctrine and Covenants*."

For additional background see: CHMR 1:345-352; DCC pp. 408-413.

"ONE MIGHTY AND STRONG"*

*[A correspondent of the ERA writes asking to know the meaning of the 7th and 8th verses of Section 85 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This question was answered by the First Presidency nearly two years ago, their reply appearing in the *Deseret News*, of Saturday, November 13, 1905. For the benefit of our correspondent, and others who may be interested in the subject, the article is here reprinted:—EDITORS.]

The following has been issued by the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in explanation of verses 7 and 8 of section 85 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and is to be received as authoritative:

The following quotation is from the eighty-fifth section of the book of Doctrine and Covenants:

And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the sceptre of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God:

While that man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God, shall fall by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning.

Perhaps no other passage in the revelations of the Lord, in this dispensation, has given rise to so much speculation as this one. Also, it has been used by vain and foolish men to bolster up their vagaries of speculation, and in some cases their pretensions to great power and high positions they were to attain in the Church. In a word, some have made claims that they were the particular individual mentioned in the revelation, the "one mighty and strong, holding the sceptre of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words,

eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints."

One would think in such a matter as this that sufficient native modesty would assert itself to restrain a man from announcing himself as the one upon whom such high honors are to be conferred, and who is to exercise such great powers in establishing the Saints in their inheritances; and that even if one suspected, for any reason, that such a position, and such exceptional powers were to be conferred upon him, he would wait until the Lord would clearly indicate to the Church, as well as to himself, that he had been indeed sent of God to do the work of so noble a ministry, as is described in the passage under question. Those, however, who have so far proclaimed themselves as being the "one mighty and strong," have manifested the utmost ignorance of the things of God and the order of the Church. Indeed their insufferable ignorance and egotism have been at the bottom of all their pretensions, and the cause of all the trouble into which they have fallen. They seem not to have been aware of the fact that the Church of Christ and of the Saints is completely organized, and that when the man who shall be called upon to divide unto the Saints their inheritances comes, he will be designated by the inspiration of the Lord to the proper authorities of the Church, appointed and sustained according to the order provided for the government of the Church. So long as that Church remains in the earth — and we have the assurance from the Lord that it will now remain in the earth forever — the Saints need look for nothing of God's appointing that will be erratic, or irregular, or that smacks of starting over afresh or that would ignore or overthrow the established order of things. The Saints should remember that they are living in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the Church of Christ is established in the earth for the last days and for the last time, and that God's Church is a Church of order, of law, and that there is no place for anarchy in it. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 112:30; also Secs. 33:3; 43:28-31.)

Respecting the views that have been expressed as to the meaning of this passage, who the man was that was "called of God and appointed, that put forth his hand to steady the ark of God," that should, "fall by the shaft of death, like a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lighting," as well as who the one "mighty and strong" was, or is to be — various theories have been advanced. Some of the dissenters from the Church have advanced the idea that the Prophet Joseph Smith, largely on account of his sad and tragic death, fell "by the shaft of death like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning," and that be-

cause of supposed transgression; while there are not wanting those who hold that the prophecy is not fulfilled, but say that the fate of falling "like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning" is a fate reserved for the present or some future President of the Church. As to the "one mighty and strong," some hold that he has come, others that he is yet to come. Some have held that the Prophet Joseph Smith was the man, and that he would be raised from the dead and appear among the Saints to fulfill the terms of this prophecy. Others have insisted that the late President Brigham Young was the man who fulfilled the prediction, when, with such heaven-inspired wisdom and masterly skill, he led the exiled Saints from Nauvoo to the Rocky Mountains and laid their settlements in the valley of Utah.

All these theories have been entertained and some of them by very good brethren; but good men and well informed men, are sometimes mistaken, and all are capable of receiving larger information, and more and more light respecting the things which God reveals.

The revelation from which the passage is quoted is a portion of a letter to William W. Phelps, written by the Prophet from Kirtland under date of November the 27th, 1832. William W. Phelps at the time was at Independence, Missouri. In order that the reader may have the whole matter before him, the letter is reproduced *in extenso*, and the part afterwards accepted as the word of the Lord indicated:

Kirtland, Nov. 27th, 1832.

BROTHER WILLIAM W. PHELPS:—I say brother, because I feel so from the heart, and although it is not long since I wrote a letter unto you, yet I feel as though you would excuse me for writing this, as I have many things which I wish to communicate. Some things which I will mention in this letter, which are lying with great weight on my mind. I am well, and my family also; God grant that you may enjoy the same, and yours, and all the brethren and sisters who remember to inquire after the commandments of the Lord, and the welfare of Zion, and such a being as myself; and while I dictate this letter, I fancy to myself that you are saying or thinking something similar to these words — "My God, great and mighty art Thou, therefore, show unto Thy servant what shall become of all those who are essaying to come up unto Zion, in order to keep the commandments of God, and yet receive not their inheritance by consecrations, by order or deed from the Bishop, the man that God has appointed in a legal way, agreeably to the law given to organize and regulate the Church, and all the affairs of the same."

Brother William, in the love of God, having the most implicit confidence in you as a man of God, having obtained this confidence by a

vision of heaven, therefore I will proceed to unfold to you some of the feelings of my heart, and to answer the question. [Here begins the revelation] "It is the duty of the Lord's clerk whom He has appointed, to keep a history, and a General Church record of all things that transpire in Zion, and of all those who consecrate properties, and receive inheritances legally from the Bishop; and also their manner of life, their faith, and works; and also of all the apostates who apostatize after receiving their inheritances. It is contrary to the will and commandment of God, that those who receive not their inheritances by consecration, agreeably to His law, which He has given, that He may tithe His people, to prepare them against the day of vengeance and burning, should have their names enrolled with the people of God; neither is their genealogy to be kept, or to be had where it may be found on any of the records or history of the Church; their names shall not be found, neither the names of the fathers, nor the names of the children written in the book of the Law of God, saith the Lord of Hosts. Yea, thus saith the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things, and oftentimes it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh manifest, saying: and it shall come to pass, that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the sceptre of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while His bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the House of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints, whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the Law of God; while that man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God, shall fall by the shaft of death like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning; and all they who are not found written in the Book of Remembrance, shall find none inheritance in that day; but they shall be cast asunder, and their portion shall be appointed among unbelievers, where are wailing and gnashing of teeth. These things I say not of myself; therefore, as the Lord speaketh, He will also fulfill. And they who are of the High Priesthood, whose names are not found written in the book of the law, or that are found to have apostatized, or to have been cut off from the Church; as well as the lesser Priesthood, or the members, in that day, shall not find an inheritance among the Saints of the Most High; therefore it shall be done unto them, as unto the children of the priest, as will be found recorded in the second chapter and sixty-first and sixty-second verses of Ezra." [End of the revelation.]

Now, Brother William, if what I have said is true, how careful men ought to be what they do in the last days, lest they are cut short of their expectations, and they that think they stand should fall, because they keep not the Lord's commandments, whilst you, who do the will of the Lord, and keep his commandments, have need to rejoice with unspeakable joy, for such shall be exalted very high, and shall be lifted up in triumph above all the kingdoms of the world; but I must drop this subject at the beginning [of it].

Oh Lord, when will the time come when Brother William, thy servant, and myself, shall behold the day that we may stand together

and gaze upon eternal wisdom engraven upon the heavens, while the majesty of our God holdeth up the dark curtain until we may read the round of eternity, to the fulness and satisfaction of our immortal souls? O Lord God, deliver us in due time from the little narrow prison, almost as it were, total darkness of paper, pen and ink; — and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.

I have obtained ten subscribers for the *Star*. Love for all the brethren. Yours in bonds. Amen.

JOSEPH SMITH, JUN.—(*History of the Church*, Vol. I, pp. 297-9.)

It is to be observed first of all that the subject of this whole letter, as also the part of it subsequently accepted as a revelation, relates to the affairs of the Church in Missouri, the gathering of the Saints to that land and obtaining their inheritances under the law of consecration and stewardship; and the Prophet deals especially with the matter of what is to become of those who fail to receive their inheritances by order or deed from the bishop. The petition which the Prophet puts into the mouth of his correspondent, Elder Phelps, is:

Show unto Thy servant what shall become of all those who are essaying to come up unto Zion, in order to keep the commandments of God, and yet receive not their inheritance by consecrations, by order or deed from the Bishop, the man that God has appointed in a legal way, agreeably to the law given to organize and regulate the Church, and all the affairs of the same.

This paragraph clearly proves that the subject in hand is the settling of the Saints in Missouri, granting them their inheritances, and the order of it all. In addition, the "bishop," who was Edward Partridge, is especially referred to as "the man that God has appointed in a legal way, agreeably to the law given to organize and regulate the Church and all the affairs of the same."

In the revelations by which Edward Partridge was called and appointed to stand as a Bishop in the land of Zion — Missouri — the following occurs:

And let my servant Edward Partridge stand in the office to which I have appointed him, and divide unto the Saints their inheritance, even as I have commanded, and also those whom he has appointed to assist him. * * * * Let the bishop and the agent make preparations for those families which have been commanded to come to this land, as soon as possible, and plant them in their inheritance. (Doc. and Cov. Sec 57:7 and 15.)

For this cause (*i. e.*, that the Saints might be gathered upon the land of Zion) I have sent you hither, and have selected my servant Edward Partridge, and have appointed unto him his mission in this land (*i. e.*, Jackson County, Missouri).

And whoso standeth in this mission is appointed to be a judge in Israel, like as it was in ancient days, to divide the lands of the heritage of God unto His children. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 58:14, 17.)

This much, then, we have learned, *viz.*, that Edward Partridge, the Bishop of the Church, was the one "called and appointed, to divide by lot unto the Saints their inheritances." But was Edward Partridge the one in 1832 who was "putting forth his hand to steady the ark," and threatened with falling "by the shaft of death like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning"? Undoubtedly. The brethren in those days were limited in their experience. The Church had been organized but as yesterday. The order of the Priesthood was not understood then, as it is today. The brethren composing it had been but recently brought together. Some of them were often in rebellion against the Prophet and the order of the Church because of these conditions; and it required instruction and time and experience to enable men to understand their duties and preserve their right relationship to each other as officers of the Church.

Bishop Partridge was one of the brethren, who — though a most worthy man, one whom the Lord loved, and whom the Prophet described as "a pattern of piety," and "one of the Lord's great men" — at time arrayed himself in opposition to the Prophet in those early days, and sought to correct him in his administrations of the affairs of the Church; in other words, "put forth his hand to steady the ark."

On the occasion of the Prophet's first visit to Independence, Missouri — Edward Partridge accompanied him — in the meetings and conferences held upon the land of Zion, Bishop Partridge several times strenuously opposed the measures of the Prophet, and was sharply reproved by the latter for his unbelief and hardness of heart. Indeed, the apostate, Ezra Booth, who was present, made the scene between the bishop and the Prophet one of the items that justified to him his apostasy. He refers to the circumstance in a letter, addressed to Bishop Partridge, which has been several times published in anti-"Mormon" literature. The Bishop, moreover, was reproved for his "blindness of heart and unbelief," and warned of the danger of falling from his high station, in a revelation given in August, 1831, while both he and the Prophet were still in Missouri:

Yea, for this cause I have sent you hither, and have selected my servant Edward Partridge, and have appointed unto him his mission in this land; but if he repent not of his sins, which are unbelief and blindness of heart, let him take heed lest he fall. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 58:14-15.)

All the foregoing occurred during the first visit of the Prophet to Missouri.

In the latter part of April, 1832, the Prophet again visited the center place of Zion — Independence, Missouri. There were still ill-feelings existing among the brethren, especially between Elder Rigdon and Bishop Partridge; but those difficulties were adjusted, and Bishop Partridge, in the conference that was held on the 26th of April, gave to the Prophet the right hand of fellowship in behalf of the Church in Missouri, and acknowledged him to be the President of the High Priesthood of the Church.

But notwithstanding the adjustment of all difficulties on this occasion, we learn from the correspondence that passed between the brethren of Kirtland and Independence, respectively, that the old difficulties in all their bitterness broke out afresh.

Referring to this subject, Elders Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith, who had been appointed by a council of High Priests at Kirtland to write a letter of reproof and warning to "Bishop Partridge, his Council and the inhabitants of Zion," say:

At the time Joseph, Sidney (Rigdon) and Newell (K. Whitney) left Zion, all matters of hardness and misunderstanding were settled and buried (as they supposed), and you gave them the hand of fellowship; but, afterwards, you brought up all these things again, in a censorious spirit accusing Brother Joseph in rather an indirect way of seeking after monarchical power and authority. * * * * It might not be amiss for you to call to mind the circumstances of the Nephites and the children of Israel rising up against their Prophets, and accusing them of seeking after kingly power, and see what befell them, and take warning before it is too late.

In a letter written by the Prophet himself on the same occasion, written to accompany a revelation which he was sending to Zion, he refers in very pointed words to the ill-feeling existing towards him by the brethren in Zion:

Though our brethren in Zion indulge in feelings toward us, which are not according to the requirements of the new covenant, yet, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the Lord approved of us, and has accepted us. * * * * Repent, repent, is the voice of God to Zion * * * * I say to you (and what I say to you I say to all), hear the warning voice of God, lest Zion fall, and the Lord swear in His wrath the inhabitants of Zion shall not enter into His rest.

Also in a revelation given on the 22nd and 23rd of September, 1832 — five months after the reconciliation at Independence — the following occurs:

And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have

received, which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole Church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all: and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion. * * * * But, verily I say unto all those to whom the kingdom has been given — from you it must be preached unto them, that they shall repent of their former evil works; for they are to be upbraided for their evil hearts of unbelief, and your brethren in Zion for their rebellion against you at the time I sent you. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 84:54-58 and 76.)

It was while these conditions of rebellion, jealousy, pride, unbelief and hardness of heart prevailed among the brethren in Zion — Jackson county, Missouri — in all of which Bishop Partridge participated, that the words of the revelation taken from the letter to William W. Phelps, of the 27th of November, 1832, were written. The "man who was called and appointed of God" to "divide unto the Saints their inheritance" — Edward Partridge — was at that time out of order, neglecting his own duty, and putting "forth his hand to steady the ark"; hence, he was warned of the judgment of God impending, and the prediction was made that another, "one mighty and strong," would be sent of God to take his place, to have his bishopric — one having the spirit and power of that high office resting upon him, by which he would have power to "set in order the house of God, and arrange by lot the inheritance of the Saints"; in other words, one who would do the work that Bishop Edward Partridge had been appointed to do, but had failed to accomplish.

"But," it will be asked, "does Bishop Partridge fulfill the terms of the prophecy that relate to the man 'falling by the shaft of death, like a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning'?" That should not be said without some qualification; although Edward Partridge died eight years later, in the forty-seventh year of his age, a victim of the persecution he suffered in Missouri.

Edward Partridge, in common with most of the Saints in Missouri, as a result of the reproofs and warnings of the Prophet and others, was brought to a partial repentance; still, as late as March, 1833, notwithstanding the partial repentance referred to, the Lord expressed himself as being "not well pleased" with Bishop Partridge and others:

Behold, I say unto you that your brethren in Zion begin to repent, and the angels rejoice over them; nevertheless, I am not well pleased with many things, and I am not well pleased with my servant William

E. McLellin, neither with my servant Sidney Gilbert; and the bishop also [Edward Partridge], and others have many things to repent of; but verily I say unto you that I, the Lord, will continue with Zion, and plead with her strong ones, and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 90:34-36.)

Because of the failure of the Saints in Zion to fully repent and keep the commandments of the Lord, the fury of their enemies burst upon them, and they were driven from their possessions into exile, and their homes were destroyed. We here give the Lord's explanation of the troubles that came upon the people; it is found in a revelation given under date of December 16th, 1833:

Verily I say unto you, concerning your brethren who have been afflicted, and persecuted, and cast out from the land of their inheritance, I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions; yet I will own them, and they shall be mine in that day when I shall come to make up my jewels. Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son; for all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified. Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances. They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble. In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me. Verily I say unto you, notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion towards them: I will not utterly cast them off; and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 101:1-9.)

In the midst of the troublous times in Missouri, Edward Partridge acted a most noble, and self-sacrificing part, and bore many indignities with the greatest patience. He was taken to the public square of Independence, partly stripped of his clothing, and bedaubed with tar and feathers, amid the jeers of the mob. He neither complained nor murmured at this treatment, but bore it well, with meekness and dignity. He was one with five others to offer himself as a ransom for the Church "Willing to be scourged or even put to death," if that would but satisfy the tormentors of the Saints, and stop the inhuman cruelties practiced towards them by the Missourians. He was also active in settling the Saints in upper Missouri, in 1836-8. He shared in all the labors and hardships incident to the settlement of a new country, and subsequently passed through the trials attendant upon the exodus of the Saints from Missouri. Who shall say that his repentance, his sacrifices, his sufferings and faithfulness did not procure for

him a mitigation of the severe judgment decreed against him in the revelation contained in the eighty-fifth section of the Doctrine and Covenants? At any rate, the Lord said, some three years later, that he was well pleased with Edward Partridge. The word of the Lord came to the Prophet to this effect, on the 7th of November, 1835:

Behold, I am well pleased with my servant Isaac Morley, and my servant Edward Partridge, because of the integrity of their hearts in laboring in my vineyard, for the salvation of the souls of men. Verily I say unto you, their sins are forgiven them, therefore, say unto them in my name, that it is my will that they should tarry for a little season, (in Kirtland) and attend the school and also the solemn assembly, for a wise purpose in me. Even so. Amen. (*History of the Church*, Vol. II, pp. 302-3.)

Certainly in the face of this plain statement of the Lord's that the sins of Edward Partridge were forgiven him, we do not feel that his sad and early death was the fulfillment of the threatened judgment of the revelation. But that he was the man so threatened in that revelation, there can be no question; not only on account of what is here set forth, but also because Orson Pratt, one familiar with Edward Partridge, and an active participant in all these historical matters, publicly declared from the pulpit in Salt Lake City, about the time of the death of President Young, that the man referred to in that passage of the revelation in question, was Bishop Edward Partridge. Of the fact of his statement, there can be no doubt; and at the time he was the historian of the Church as well as a member of the quorum of the Apostles.

Now, as to the "one mighty and strong," who shall be sent of God, to "set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritance of the Saints." Who is he? What position will he hold in the Church? In what manner will he come to his calling? We draw attention first of all to the fact that this whole letter to William W. Phelps, as well as the part afterwards accepted as the word of the Lord, related to the affairs of the Church in Zion, Independence, Jackson county, Missouri. And inasmuch as through his repentance and sacrifices and suffering, Bishop Edward Partridge undoubtedly obtained a mitigation of the threatened judgment against him of falling "by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning," so the occasion for sending another to fill his station — "one mighty and strong to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints" — may also be considered as having passed away and the whole incident of the prophecy closed.

Such examples of the Lord thus dealing with men are found in other scriptures than in this revelation. The word of the Lord came to the Prophet Isaiah, commanding him to carry what was really a death sentence to Hezekiah, King of Israel, which sentence, however, was revoked by the Lord when the king earnestly prayed that his life might be spared unto him. The incident is related in the second book of Kings, as follows:

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the Prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz came to him and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live.

Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying,

I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying,

Turn again, and tell Hezekiah, the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David, thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.

And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (II Kings 20:1-6.)

Notwithstanding his self-enumeration of virtues, in the above passage, it is quite evident from the closing verses of the chapter that King Hezekiah was a proud, vain and selfish man; yet the Lord loved him for the good that was in him, and hearkened to his prayer, and set aside the sentence of death decreed against him.

Other instances of like procedure will doubtless occur to the Saints as they think upon this subject. If God, in the case of Hezekiah and other of his servants, prophets and kings in Israel, could thus mitigate or change the decree against them, should it be accounted a strange thing that he forgave Edward Partridge his sins, and withheld the execution of the judgment pronounced against him?

If, however, there are those who will still insist that the prophecy concerning the coming of "one mighty and strong" is still to be regarded as relating to the future, let the Latter-day Saints know that he will be a future bishop of the Church who will be with the Saints in Zion, Jackson county, Missouri, when

the Lord shall establish them in that land; and he will be so blessed with the spirit and power of his calling that he will be able to set in order the house of God, pertaining to the department of the work under his jurisdiction; and in righteousness and justice will "arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints." He will hold the same high and exalted station that Edward Partridge held; for the latter was called to do just this kind of work — that is, to set in order the house of God as pertaining to settling the Saints upon their inheritances, as will appear from the following passage:

And let my servant Edward Partridge stand in the office to which I have appointed him, and divide unto the saints their inheritance, even as I have commanded, and also those whom he has appointed to assist him. * * * * Let the bishop and the agent make preparations for those families which have been commanded to come to this land, as soon as possible, and plant them in their inheritance. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 57:7 and 15.)

For this cause (*viz.*, that the Saints might be gathered upon the land of Zion) I have sent you hither, and have selected my servant Edward Partridge, and have appointed unto him his mission in this land (in Jackson County, Missouri).

And whoso standeth in this mission is appointed to be a judge in Israel, like as it was in ancient days, to divide the lands of the heritage of God unto his children. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 58:14, 17.)

This future bishop will also be called and appointed of God as Aaron of old, and as Edward Partridge was. He will be designated by the inspiration of the Lord, and will be accepted and sustained by the whole Church, as the law of God provides. His coming will not be the result of a wild, erratic movement, or the assumption of authority by a self-appointed egotist seeking power that he may lord it over the people; God's house is one of order, and admits of no such irregular procedure.

Certainly this prophecy does not allude in any way to any President of the Church, past, present, or to come. The revelation under consideration does not relate to matters that especially concern the duties of the President of the Church: but to the arranging "by lot the inheritances of the Saints," and that is the whole substance of the revelation, a matter distinctly placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the Church. If it shall be urged that the phrase "to set in order the house of God," indicates a larger scope of action than that contemplated in settling the Saints upon their inheritances, the reasonable and sufficient answer is that the scope of this phrase should most certainly be interpreted by the whole subject of the revelation, and not the meaning of the revelation by the particular phrase. So that the phrase,

“set in order the house of God” is limited to setting in order the house of God by arranging by lot the inheritances of the Saints.

In conclusion, we would say that the Latter-day Saints by this time, should be so well settled in the conviction that God has established his Church in the earth for the last time, to remain, and no more to be thrown down, or destroyed; and that God's house is a house of order, of law, of regularity, that erratic disturbers of that order of men of restless temperament, who, through ignorance and egotism become vain babblers, yet make great pretensions to prophetic powers and other spiritual graces and gifts, ought not to have any influence with them, nor ought the Saints to be disturbed in their spirit by such characters and their theories. The Church of Christ is with the Saints. It has committed to it the law of God for its own government and perpetuation. It possesses every means for the correction of every wrong or abuse or error which may from time to time arise, and that without anarchy, or even revolution; it can do it by processes of evolution — by development, by an increase of knowledge, wisdom, patience and charity.

The presiding quorums of the Church will always be composed of such men, they will be chosen in such manner, that the Saints can be assured that solid wisdom, righteousness, and conscientious adherence to duty, will characterize the policy of those who are entrusted with the administration of the affairs of the Church. While from time to time, as the work of the Lord may have need of their services, men of exceptional talents and abilities, will develop among the people of God; and without disorder, or eruption, or excitement, they will be called of the Lord, through the appointed agencies of the Priesthood and Church authority, to positions that will afford them opportunity for service. They will be accepted by the Saints in the regular order, appointed by the law of the Church, just as Edward Partridge was called and accepted; and just as the “one mighty and strong” will be called and accepted when the time comes for his services.

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JOHN R. WINDER,
ANTHON H. LUND,
First Presidency.

1905 — November 25 — Original letter. Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

The “present edition” of the Doctrine and Covenants referred to in this letter presumably was the edition of 1902. The first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants appeared in 1835. The early editions had fewer revelations in them and the material was not verified. The Doctrine and Covenants