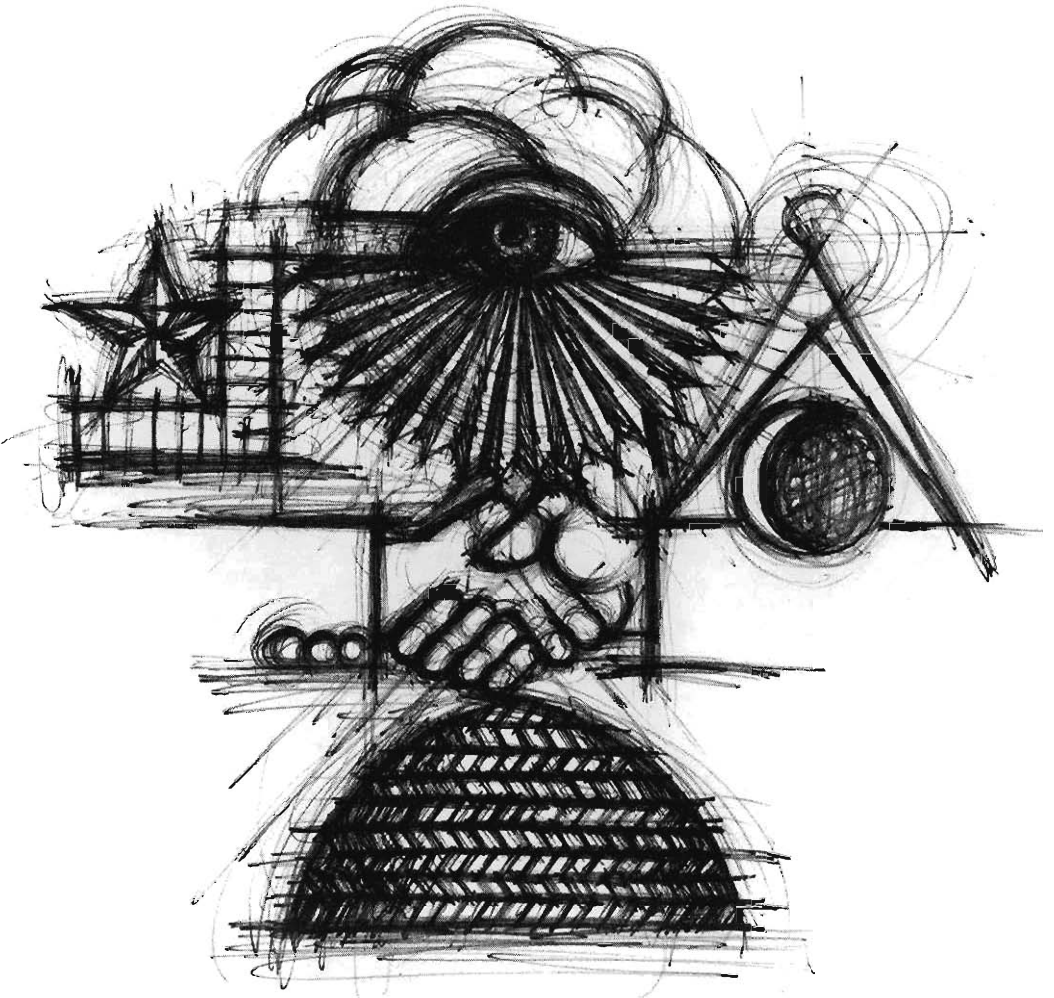


“The Fulness of the Priesthood”: The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice

There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God without the fulness of the priesthood. . . . Every man who is faithful and will receive these [temple] ordinances and blessings obtains a fulness of the priesthood, and the Lord has said that “he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, 1956
(*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:132)



The importance of the endowment and such temple-associated rituals as washing, anointing, and sealing has been widely addressed by Church authorities and others in official Church publications.¹ The endowment in particular has been called the temporal steppingstone through which all people must pass to achieve exaltation with God the Father and Jesus Christ.² Yet despite the attention given temple work in the Church press, most Mormons, even faithful temple-goers, know little of the capstone of the endowment: receiving the “fulness of the priesthood” through the “second anointing,” an ordinance also sometimes referred to as the “other endowment,” “second endowment,” “second blessings,” “higher blessings,” etc. A surprising amount about this little known ordinance can be learned, however, through a careful examination of those sources published and unpublished, which discuss it. This essay attempts to bring many of these sources together, placing them in the more general context of developing Mormon theology.

I

The Lord Almighty . . . will continue to preserve me . . . until I have fully accomplished my mission in this life, and so firmly established the dispensation of the fullness of the priesthood in the last days, that all the powers of earth and hell can never prevail against it.

Joseph Smith, Jr., 1842
(*History of the Church*, 5:139–40)

DAVID JOHN BUERGER is a certified financial planner in San Jose, California. He wishes to thank Lester E. Bush, Jr., and Anthony A. Hutchinson for help in the preparation of this paper.

¹ For example, see James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1912), pp. 18, 99–100, 234–38; John A. Widtsoe, “Fundamentals of Temple Doctrine,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 13 (July 1922): 129; Franklin D. Richards, “The Temple of the Lord: The Importance of Temples, Ancient and Modern,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 11 (Oct. 1920): 146–49; *Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979); entire issue of *Ensign* 4 (Aug. 1974); and numerous conference talks by various Church leaders. Also see Nels B. Lundwall, comp., *Temples of the Most High*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975), pp. 269–74; *Young Woman’s Journal* 5 (Aug. 1894): 513; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), pp. 109–10, 139–40, 226–28, 425, 594, 599, 613, 779; Bruce R. McConkie, comp., *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 2:40–46, 176–79; 3:131–34. Scholarly articles of certain aspects of the endowment ceremonies include Lisle G. Brown, “The Sacred Departments for Temple Work in Nauvoo: The Assembly Room and the Council Chamber,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Spring 1979): 361–74; Andrew F. Ehat, “‘They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet’—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 133–66 (esp. notes); Andrew F. Ehat, “‘It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth’: Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God,” *BYU Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 253–80; Andrew F. Ehat and Lindon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980) (esp. notes; hereafter cited as *WJS*); and D. Michael Quinn, “Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 79–105.

² *Gospel Essentials*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), p. 247.

For Joseph Smith and his successors, the temple clearly stood at the heart of the restoration. Both in Kirtland and Nauvoo, Joseph Smith labored continuously to complete holy edifices where the Saints might be “endowed with power from on high.”³ Washings, anointings, and sealings were first administered in the Kirtland Temple in 1836. Other temple instructions and rites were added in Nauvoo in 1842 and 1843. These have been continued to the present day. Not unexpectedly, given the generally progressive nature of other early concepts within Mormonism, these early rituals also moved through a preliminary stage.

The significance of what followed can best be understood in the context of the changing Latter-day Saint concept of salvation.⁴ Prior to mid-1831, Mormon theology was clearly not predestinarian. The Book of Mormon, for example, contains no mention of terms such as “calling and election,” “elect,” “destined,” “predestined,” or “predestinate” in respect to mankind’s afterlife, judgment or salvation. The Doctrine and Covenants’ sole use of the phrase “calling and election” came in a June 1831 revelation (D&C 53:1, 7) that similarly avoided eschatological implications.

At some point between June and November 1831, however, LDS “salvation theology” changed. A precipitating event seemed to be the 3 June 1831 conferral of the “High Priesthood” on Church elders.⁵ According to testimony in 1887 by Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer, the introduction of high priests, an event he considered to be an unfortunate aberration from scriptural sources, “all originated in the mind of Sidney Rigdon”; “Rigdon finally persuaded Brother Joseph to believe that the high priests which had such great power in ancient times, should be in the Church of Christ to-day. He had Brother Joseph inquire of the Lord about it, and they received an answer according to their erring desires.”⁶ Official Church histories contain no record of disagreement or controversy, and the significance of the event may have been perceived differently as time passed. The new office of high priest quickly came to be regarded as different from and greater than those of priest and elder because a high priest could “seal,” that is, perform earthly ordinances which were ratified in heaven. Joseph Smith spelled out this crucial function on 25 October 1831, when he is reported to have said at a conference in Far West: “The order of the High Priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life And . . . it was the privilege of every Elder present to be ordained to the High Priesthood.”⁷

³ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), 2:197 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*). Remarks made on 15 Feb. 1835 by Oliver Cowdery.

⁴ I am indebted to Anthony A. Hutchinson for extensive assistance with the following discussion of the evolution of Mormon salvation concepts.

⁵ *History of the Church* 1:175–76.

⁶ David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, n.p. 1887): 64, 35; see also pp. 32, 49, 62, 63, and 65.

⁷ “Far West Record,” in the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

The far-reaching implications of this teaching went well beyond the biblical precedents which used sealing in a seemingly related sense. In the New Testament, for example, the terms "to seal" and "to place a seal on" metaphorically reflected the ancient practice of placing a wax or clay seal to close and protect a document from misappropriation. The confirming effect of a "sealing" is seen in several Pauline passages where God "seals" Christians by giving them the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit of promise as a ratification of future blessings and promises to come. The Revelation of John graphically depicts the servants of God receiving the seal or imprint of God in their foreheads. In all pertinent New Testament references, however, it is God who applies the seals; there is no clear reference to a human intermediary as part of the "sealing" function.⁸

The sixteenth-century Reformation used many of these "sealing" passages to support a belief in predestination. Liberal reaction to this Calvinist doctrine arose early in the seventeenth century when Armenians rejected this view, asserting that God's sovereignty and man's free will were compatible, and that such "sealings" depended upon choices of the individual believer. The Armenian doctrines of free will and individual works continued to be propagated on the American frontier through such nineteenth-century groups as Alexander Campbell's followers and other primitivist "seekers." In 1829, when Joseph Smith was working on the Book of Mormon manuscript, these same issues were discussed throughout the Burned-over District of western New York state.

Aside from obvious nonmetaphorical usages of the term "sealing" (e.g., "sealing up" a book or plates, or hiding an object), the Book of Mormon employs the term much like the New Testament. Mosiah 5:15 (1st ed., p. 167), for example, closely followed New Testament usage, but extended the meaning by clearly emphasizing works: "I would that you should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to Heaven." Alma 34:35 (1st ed., p. 321) further counters predestinarian ideas by warning: "If ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance, even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the Devil, and he doth seal you his; . . . and this is the final state of the wicked."

The most significant development in Book of Mormon sealing theology was God's sealing power granted to Nephi, the son of Helaman: "Whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." (Hel. 10:7, 1st ed., p. 435).⁹ This passage parallels Christ's injunction to Peter in Matthew 16:17-19: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona . . . Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The shift from *bind* to *seal* — probably to remove "papist" associations with

⁸ See, for example, Rom. 4:11, 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13, 4:30; Rev. 13:16-18.

⁹ The story clearly is patterned on the account of Elijah the Tishbite "sealing" the heavens by drought in 1 Kings 17; also compare the Nephi-Elijah connection in Hel. 5:30, 1 Kings 19:11-12. Additional parallels to Matt. 16:17-19 are Mark 8:29, Luke 9:20, and loose parallels in John 6:67-71 and 20:22-23. See also Gen. 14:26-32, JST.

the text¹⁰— does not carry the soteriological and eschatological overtones which “seal” had as a New Testament metaphor. Instead, Nephi can perform miraculous physical events such as commanding a drought that will bring about a famine (Hel. 11:4) to bring people to repentance. Thus, the Book of Mormon modifies seal to allow a *human* agent (Nephi), to seal metaphorically as well as a demonic agent (the devil), whereas the New Testament has only God sealing, and then strictly in an extended sense of the term. Associating a human with this power allowed Joseph Smith to introduce a whole set of theological innovations.

In this context, the 1831 ordination of high priests becomes such an innovation. In November 1831 these various concepts were transformed into a priesthood ritual allowing ordained high priests to “seal [persons] up unto eternal life” (D&C 68:2,12; D&C 1:8–9). Thus, Mormon priesthood bearers themselves could perform a ritual (no specified ceremony is mentioned) paralleling what strict Calvinists, for example, reserved solely to God. Zebedee Coltrin’s 1831 missionary diary provides evidence that Mormon elders wasted no time in implementing this ordinance: “Tuesday came to Shalersville held a meeting in the Evening with the Br and after laboring with them some length of time Br David seeled them up unto Eternal life.”¹¹ Whatever form the ordinance took at that time, an empowered priesthood bearer could thus simultaneously seal a whole group of people up to eternal life; this seems to have been a spoken ritual. No physical contact between the officiator and the recipients is mentioned.¹²

A second precursor to the Kirtland Temple’s endowment came in an 1832 revelation (now D&C 88) commanding that a “School of the Prophets” be established to instruct various Church leaders. After describing a format for greeting members of the School, the revelation added that no one was to be admitted unless he was “clean from the blood of this generation.”

And he shall be received by the ordinance of the washing of feet, for unto this end was the ordinance of washing of feet instituted.

And again, the ordinance of washing of feet is to be administered by the president, or presiding elder of the church.

It is to be commenced with prayer; and after partaking of bread and wine, he is to gird himself according to the pattern given in the thirteenth chapter of John’s testimony concerning me. Amen. (D&C 88:139–41; see also verses 74–75)

¹⁰ For other passages from the Book of Mormon which seem to describe the Roman Catholic church from the perspective of anti-papist frontiersmen in the Burned-over District, see 1 Ne. 13:4–9, 24–29; 14:10–17; 2 Ne. 28:18–28. See also Susan Curtis Mernitz, “Palmyra Revisited: a Look at Early Nineteenth Century America and the Book of Mormon,” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 2 (1982): 30–37.

¹¹ Zebedee Coltrin, Diary, 15 Nov. 1831, LDS Church Archives.

¹² In some ways, this ordinance paralleled that revealed in D&C 60:15 and D&C 84:92 wherein priesthood bearers were authorized to seal up wicked persons to a damning judgment with a washing-of-feet and shaking-off-of-dust ceremony. This “ordinance of damnation” could also be performed with reference to a group of people at once.

The School of the Prophets was formally established in late January 1833, and this ordinance was administered as directed.¹³ While the revelation did not explicitly state any relationship between the ordinance of washing feet and the ritual of "sealing" which had been practiced for over a year, Joseph indicated that in addition to being "clean from the blood of this generation," participants in the washing of feet were "sealed up unto eternal life."¹⁴

Doctrine and Covenants 88:119 had commanded the Saints to "establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God." Six months later, on 1 June, the Lord rebuked the Prophet for failing to begin construction of a house where He would "endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high" (D&C 95:8).

While work on the Kirtland Temple thereafter proceeded apace, even before the dedication on 27 March 1836 (see D&C 109), Joseph had introduced the promised new ordinances which were to comprise the core of what later was termed the Kirtland endowment. On 21 January, according to Joseph Smith's account in the *History of the Church*, the First Presidency

retired to the attic story of the printing office, where we attended the ordinance of washing our bodies in pure water. We also perfumed our bodies and our heads, in the name of the Lord.

At early candle-light I met with the Presidency at the west school room, in the Temple, to attend to the ordinance of anointing our heads with holy oil . . . I took the oil in my left hand, Father Smith being seated before me, and the remainder of the Presidency encircled him round about. We then stretched our right hands towards heaven, and blessed the oil, and consecrated it in the name of Jesus Christ.

We then laid our hands upon our aged Father Smith, and invoked the blessings of heaven. I then anointed his head with the consecrated oil, and sealed many blessings upon him. The Presidency then in turn laid their hands upon his head, beginning at the oldest, until they had all laid their hands upon him, and pronounced such blessings upon his head, as the Lord put into their hearts, all blessing him to be our Patriarch, to anoint our heads. . . . The presidency then took the seat in their turn, according to their age, beginning at the oldest, and received their anointing and blessing under the hands of Father Smith.¹⁵

After several days of anointings administered to other priesthood bearers, the Prophet, on 6 February 1836,

called the anointed together to receive the seal of all their blessings . . . The first part [of the inspired order was] to be spent in solemn prayer before God, without any talking or confusion; and the conclusion with a sealing prayer by President Rigdon, when all the quorums were to shout with one accord a solemn hosanna to God and the Lamb, with an Amen, Amen and Amen; and then all take seats and lift up their hearts in silent prayer to God, and if any obtain a prophecy or vision, to rise and speak that all may be edified and rejoice together.¹⁶

¹³ *History of the Church*, 1:322–23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 323, 23 Jan. 1833.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:379–82, 21 Jan. 1836.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 391–92, 6 Feb. 1836.

A few weeks later at the dedication of the temple, Joseph Smith instructed the quorums of lay members and Church officers on the ordinance of washing of feet.¹⁷ Two days later, on March 29th, the Presidency “proceeded to cleanse our faces and our feet, and then proceeded to wash one another’s feet.” After this was done, those in attendance “partook of the bread and wine.”¹⁸ The next day, a group of about three hundred male Church members met in the temple and, after the administration of the sacrament, received the ordinance of washing of feet as well. The Prophet then announced that he “had now completed the organization of the Church, and we had passed through all the necessary ceremonies.”¹⁹ It was just four days later, however, again in the Kirtland Temple, that Joseph received a vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 110, of the prophet Elijah²⁰ who gave him the full sealing power of the Melchizedek priesthood — an authority which Joseph Smith did not fully reveal and use until Nauvoo.

In Nauvoo the Prophet Joseph continued to expand Mormon salvation concepts. He defined the principle of “making your calling and election sure” in a June 1839 sermon as a principle which allowed a Church member, after a lifetime of service and devotion, to be “sealed up” to exaltation while yet living, a concept clearly based on 2 Peter 1:10–11: “Wherefore . . . brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”²¹ This June 1839 sermon²² has additional importance, for in it Joseph not only linked making one’s calling and election sure to sealing theology but also added the notion of a “Comforter” (John 14:26), which he defined as a personal manifestation of Jesus Christ. These ideas were in turn associated with the concept of personal revelation. He urged the Twelve Apostles and all Mormons to follow in his own footsteps and “become perfect in Jesus Christ.” There was no reference to the temple in this sermon; indeed there were no functioning temples at this time.

In January 1841, well over two years after the Mormons had abandoned Kirtland and its temple, Joseph announced another revelation. In it the Lord

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 410–28, 27 March 1836.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 429–30.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 430–33.

²⁰ In addition to the scriptural parallels dealing with Elijah, the vision introducing Elijah in 1836 formed a foundation for further theological innovations. Elijah began to serve as a major symbol in Joseph Smith’s sermons and in his 1838 account of his early life. No scriptural references from Malachi are cited by the angel in Joseph’s 1832 account.

²¹ See also 2 Pet. 1:19, and Eph. 1:13–14.

²² *History of the Church*, 3:379–81, 27 June 1839. The original source is Willard Richards Pocket Companion, published in *WJS*, pp. 4–6. A brief discussion of this doctrine is in Roy W. Doxey, “Accepted of the Lord: The Doctrine of Making Your Calling and Election Sure,” *Ensign* 6 (July 1976): 50–53; a more indepth discussion is: Hyrum L. Andrus, *Principles of Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970), pp. 331–400.

asked, "How shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?" (D&C 124:37) The purpose of this new temple would be "that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people; For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times." (D&C 124:40-41). Anointed Saints were thus advised that their Kirtland ordinances were forerunners to other ordinances to be revealed after a temple was completed in Nauvoo. As before, however, these ordinances were revealed in advance by the Prophet to a select group of Church leaders and their wives — the "Quorum of the Anointed," or "Holy Order."²³ This action proved providential, as Joseph was killed well before the temple's dedication.

On 4 May 1842 the Prophet, after two days of preparation in the upper story of his store in Nauvoo, gathered together nine men: James Adams, Heber C. Kimball, William Law, William Marks, George Miller, Willard Richards, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and Brigham Young. There, according to the *History of the Church*, he

instruct[ed] them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchisedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days. . . . therefore let the Saints . . . [know] assuredly that all these things referred to in this council are always governed by the principle of revelation.²⁴

²³ This group was also called the Holy Order of the Holy Priesthood. For a brief discussion of this group, see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 84-96.

²⁴ *History of the Church*, 5:1-2. The context of the Nauvoo endowment ceremony is too complex to be fully treated in this short essay. Clearly one element was the gradual introduction of the practice of plural marriage, primarily to members of the elite "Holy Order" although Joseph Smith never taught plural marriage in the endowment council or Holy Order itself. "Sealing" spouses and families together for eternity (again finding their inspiration in the prophet Elijah), and progressing toward godhood ultimately required a formal ritual to give a sense of permanence and divine sanction to these beliefs. The addition of this "sealing" ritual, in the context of this discussion of second anointings, was added to the 1842 Holy Order ceremony one year later. See Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 123-225, 290-336; esp. see pp. 143-45. See also Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith" (MA thesis, Purdue University, 1975).

The actual procedures of the endowment ceremony have created much speculation centered on its possible relationship to certain aspects of Masonic ritual. Some scholars have concluded that Joseph Smith relied heavily on certain Masonic rites in framing the endowment. During this period his sermons contain many allusions to such Masonic notions as signs, key words, tokens, degrees, ancient orders, etc. Indeed, Heber C. Kimball, a long-time Mason, wrote to Parley P. Pratt on 17 June 1842: "there is a similarity of preast Hood in masonry. Br Joseph Ses Masonary was taken from preasthood but has become degenerated.

There are some problems with this account. It is historically interesting that the *History* omits William Law and William Marks, who later became disaffected.²⁵ More significant is the apparent error in the statement that the "highest order of the Melchisedek Priesthood" was conferred upon these men. About four months later, in late August 1842, Joseph Smith declared to the Female Relief Society that "the Lord Almighty . . . will continue to preserve me . . . until I have fully accomplished my mission in this life, and so firmly established the dispensation of the fullness of the priesthood in the last days, that all the powers of earth and hell can never prevail against it" (italics

But menny things are perfect. . . ." (typescript; original in LDS Church Archives). The introduction of a secret society may have been ideally suited to keep knowledge of polygamist practices from uninitiated Saints and non-Mormons. Unfortunately, a definitive study of the relationship of Freemasonry and Mormonism has not yet been published. Introductory material includes Reed C. Durham, Jr., "Is There No Help for the Widow's Son?", Presidential Address to the Mormon History Association, 20 April 1974; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Joseph Smith and the Masons," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 64 (Spring 1971): 79-90; S. H. Goodwin, *Mormonism and Masonry: A Utah Point of View* (Salt Lake City: Grand Lodge, F.&A.M. of Utah, 1938); S. H. Goodwin, *Additional Studies in Mormonism and Masonry* (Salt Lake City, 1932); Mervin B. Hogan, *The Origin and Growth of Utah Masonry and Its Conflict With Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Campus Graphics, 1978); Mervin B. Hogan, *Mormonism and Freemasonry: The Illinois Episode* (Salt Lake City: Campus Graphics, 1980); Anthony W. Ivins, *Mormonism and Freemasonry* (Salt Lake City, 1934); and E. Cecil McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956).

Brigham Young recalled specific procedures of the 4 May 1842 endowment on 7 February 1877:

Prest Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said when we got our washings and anointings under the hands of the Prophet Joseph at Nauvoo we had only one room to work in with the exception of a little side room or office were . . . he had performed these ceremonies. . . . then after we went into the large room over the store in Nauvoo. Joseph divided up the room the best that he could . . . gave us our instructions. . . . After we had got through. Bro Joseph turned to me (Prest B. Young) and said Bro Brigham this is not arranged right but we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I . . . wish you to take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies. . . . I did so and each time I got something more so that when we went through the Temple at Nauvoo I understood and Knew how to place them there. we had our ceremonies pretty correct. (L. John Nuttall, Journal, typescript entry for 7 Feb. 1877, original in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.)

Heber C. Kimball recorded his part in this event under a miscellaneous 1845 journal entry entitled "Strange Events": ". . . I was aniciated into the ancient order was washed and annointed and Sealled and ordained a Preast, and so forth in company with nine others." (LDS Church Archives)

Mormon apostate John C. Bennett described his perspective of the Holy Order in his *History of the Saints* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), pp. 217-35, 272-78.

²⁵ A complete list of names is found in Kimball, "Strange Events." Kimball's 21 December 1845 journal entry refers to two unnamed participants in this event as being "worse than dead." Law apostatized from the Church shortly before Joseph and Hyrum Smith's murders in June 1844; Marks became disaffected from the Church and, after briefly affiliating with Sidney Rigdon, James J. Strang, and other dissidents, ultimately joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1859. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16 (Winter 1976): 214.

added).²⁶ The establishment of "the fulness of the priesthood" was an event the Prophet viewed as his future life mission, not as an accomplished fact.

Almost a year later on 6 August 1843, Wilford Woodruff reported that Brigham Young confirmed that the fulness of the priesthood was yet to be given: "If any in the Church had the fullness of the Melchisedec Priesthood, he [Brigham Young] did not know it." Clearly, though, Joseph had at least discussed this concept with him for Young added, "For any person to have the fullness of that priesthood, he must be a king and a priest A person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom."²⁷

Other relevant facets of Mormon thinking had also matured by the time Brigham Young made that statement, notably a refinement in the Latter-day Saint view of "eternal life." Prior to receiving the "three degrees of glory" vision in February 1832 (now D&C 76), Mormons, including Joseph Smith, understood "eternal life" in the same sense as other Protestants: an undifferentiated heaven as the only alternative to an undifferentiated hell. Even after February 1832 and possibly as late as 1843, the Prophet apparently still conceived "eternal life" as dwelling in the presence of Elohim forever. It was not

²⁶ *History of the Church*, 5:139-40, 31 Aug. 1842. Since this citation is not in the regular Nauvoo Relief Society minutes or in the Manuscript History of the Church, it probably represents an anachronistic reinterpretation of Joseph Smith's original comments.

²⁷ *History of the Church*, 5:527. This account was taken from Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 6 Aug. 1843, LDS Church Archives. Compare Orson Pratt's sermon, 24 May 1845, *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 June 1845): 920. Brigham Young's remarks on being anointed a king and priest originated in the endowment ritual administered to selected Church members by Joseph Smith. As Heber C. Kimball explained to a Nauvoo Temple audience on 21 Dec. 1845, "You have been anointed to be kings & priests, but you have not been ordained to it yet, and you have got to get it by being faithful." This concept was mentioned again by George Q. Cannon in 1883: ". . . in the washing that takes place in the first endowment, they are washed that they might *become* clean from the blood of this generation . . . in the same way they are ordained *to be* Kings and Priests — that ordinance does not make them . . . Kings and Priests. If they fully received of another endowment [*i.e.* the second anointing], a fulness of that power, and the promises are fulfilled in the bestowal of the power upon them." (Salt Lake [City] School of the Prophets Minute Book, typescript entry for 2 Aug. 1883, original in LDS Church Archives; emphasis in original). In 1941, Apostle David O. McKay explained that the "first anointing" is conferred in the initiatory ordinances of the endowment where "one . . . is anointed to become a king and a priest of the Most High; a queen and a priestess in the realms of God. . . . We are anointed that we may become such." "The Temple Ceremony," address delivered at the Salt Lake Temple Annex, 25 Sept. 1941, LDS Archives; also published in Joseph C. Muren, comp., *The Temple and Its Significance*, rev. ed. (Ogden, Utah: Temple Publications, 1974).

For purposes contemporary to the endowment received by members of the Nauvoo Holy Order, however, it may be that this "first anointing" was an actual, not promissory, ordination, for Heber C. Kimball's own diary recollection of the 4 May 1842 ceremony (cited n. 24) was that he was "ordained a Preast." Notably, the Kirtland "endowment" actually pronounced recipients "clean from the blood of this generation"; yet Kimball's 21 Dec. 1845 diary also records him telling the same temple audience cited above of more blessings to come "if you are faithful and keep your tongue in your mouth." Apparently the concept of purification was also undergoing development and the actual form of this ceremony changed as Joseph Smith developed a fuller understanding of the fulness of the priesthood ordinance and its relationship to the Mormon concept of godhood.

until May 1843 that Joseph taught that the celestial kingdom ostensibly²⁸ contained gradations, with the highest gradation reserved solely for men and women who entered into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:1-4).²⁹ In July 1843, Joseph dictated another revelation (now D&C 132) which defined those achieving "exaltation" in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom as "gods."³⁰

The importance of this teaching is seen in another Joseph Smith sermon given shortly thereafter on 27 August 1843. Significantly, these comments occurred in a discussion of three orders or levels of priesthood: the Levitical or Aaronic order, the patriarchal order of Abraham, and the fulness of the priesthood of Melchizedek which included "kingly powers" of "anointing & sealing — called elected and made sure."³¹ Said Joseph: "No man can attain to the Joint heirship with Jesus Christ with out being administered to by one having the same power & Authority of Melchisedec." This authority and power came not from "a Prophet nor apostle nor Patriarch only but of [a] King & Priest [of Jesus Christ]."³²

During this same 27 August 1843 sermon the Prophet said: "Abrahams [*sic*] Patriarchal power" was the "greatest yet experienced in this church."³³ His choice of words is particularly revealing, for by this date ten men had received the initiatory washings and anointings, as well as the Aaronic and Melchizedek portions of the endowment of the "Patriarchal Priesthood" on 4 May 1842. Many of these had also received the ordinance of celestial marriage, for time and eternity with their wives. Joseph and Emma Hale Smith, for example, were sealed in May 1843, as were James and Harriet Adams, Brigham and Mary Ann Angell Young, Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith, and Willard and Jennetta Richards Richards.³⁴ When Joseph said late in

²⁸ Although this is the current interpretation of this teaching, some have argued that Joseph Smith was merely redescribing the trilogistic concept of three general degrees of glory as outlined in D&C 76. In other words, the "highest level" spoken of in D&C 131:2 would be synonymous with "celestial kingdom," while the "celestial glory" in D&C 131:1 would only be referring to the "resurrection of the just" described by D&C 76.

²⁹ An early letter published by W. W. Phelps, *Manager & Advocate* 9 (June 1835): 130, suggests that Joseph Smith may have taught a variation of this doctrine eight years prior to D&C 131: "We shall by and bye learn that . . . we may prepare ourselves for a kingdom of glory; become archangels, even the sons of God where the man is neither without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord. . . ."

³⁰ Although the doctrine and limited practice of plural marriage had been extant for several years prior to the 12 July 1843 dictation of D&C 132, the recording of this important revelation introduced several crucial ideas which are pivotal in understanding the theology surrounding the second anointing ritual. See Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," Ph.D. diss., Dept. of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University, 1974, vol. 3, pp. 1731-61; and Bachman, "The Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage."

³¹ Joseph Smith, Diary, LDS Church Archives; also cited in *WJS*, p. 244.

³² In "Scriptural Items," LDS Church Archives, as cited in *WJS*, p. 245.

³³ Compare Joseph Smith sermon of 27 June 1839, cited n. 22.

³⁴ Joseph Smith, Diary, 28 May 1843, LDS Church Archives. I am indebted to Andrew F. Ehat for sharing his transcription of this entry which was originally made in Taylor shorthand.

August that the Patriarchal Priesthood was the "greatest yet experienced in this church," he was well aware that the fulness of the Melchizedek priesthood was yet to be conferred through a higher ordinance.

In a sense the institution of this "higher ordinance" was the logical next step. The previous twelve years of pronouncements, sealings, and anointings "unto eternal life" guaranteed a status that, according to Joseph's 1843 teachings, was subservient to that of the gods. From the perspective of these teachings, even the Nauvoo endowment administered to members of the "Holy Order" simply provided that the men who received it would live in the celestial kingdom as angels and servants. Until 1843, women had been excluded from these ordinances, possibly because of Joseph Smith's personal reluctance, Emma Smith's rejection of polygamy, John C. Bennett's lurid exposé, and/or the apostasy and subsequent reconciliation of Orson and Sarah Pratt over polygamy. However, Doctrine and Covenants 131 and 132 indicated that this exclusion deprived the men (who had received the previous ordinances) of the highest kingdom of glory — godhood. The higher ordinance was necessary to confirm the revealed promises of "kingly powers" (i.e., godhood) received in the endowment's initiatory ordinances. Godhood was therefore the meaning of this higher ordinance, or second anointing, for the previously revealed promises in Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–26 implicitly referred not to those who had been sealed in celestial marriage but to those who had been sealed and ordained "kings and priests," "queens and priestesses" to God. Such individuals would necessarily have received the "second anointing"; "Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them."

This special priesthood ordinance was first administered on 28 September 1843 to Joseph and Emma Smith. The *History of the Church* gives a discreet account of this event:

At half-past eleven, a.m., a council convened over the store, consisting of myself, my brother Hyrum, Uncle John Smith, Newel K. Whitney, George Miller, Willard Richards, John Taylor, Amasa Lyman, John M. Bernhisel, and Lucien Woodworth; and at seven in the evening we met in the front upper room of the Mansion, with William Law and William Marks. By the common consent and unanimous voice of the counsel, I was chosen president of the special council.

The president led in prayer that his days might be prolonged until his mission on the earth is accomplished, have dominion over his enemies, all their households be blessed, and all the Church and the world.³⁵

Joseph Smith's journal, the original source, gives a fuller account: "Baurak Ale [a code name for Joseph Smith] was by common consent, & unanimous voice chosen president of the quorum. & anointed & ord[ained] to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood (& companion)." ³⁶ His "companion" was his wife, Emma, to whom he had been sealed for time and eternity four months earlier on May 28. Wilford Woodruff's record of this event, found in his 1858

³⁵ *History of the Church*, 6:39.

³⁶ Joseph Smith, Diary, 28 Sept. 1843, LDS Church Archives. Baurak Ale was a scriptural "code" designation for Joseph Smith; see D&C 103:21 (1971 ed.).

Historian's Private Journal, was equally explicit: "Then by common consent Joseph Smith the Prophet Received his second Anointing of the Highest & Holiest order."³⁷

During the next five months this higher priesthood ordinance of the second anointing was conferred upon at least twenty men and the wives of sixteen of these men. As the accompanying figure³⁸ shows, fulness of priesthood blessings during Joseph Smith's lifetime were reserved primarily for Church leaders. An apparent reason for the Prophet's concern to complete the temple and administer the fulness of the priesthood to the Twelve was that these leaders must "round up their shoulders and bear it [the Kingdom] off," and, said Joseph, "'the Kingdom will be established, and I do not care what shall become of me.'" As George Q. Cannon noted in 1869, "It was by the virtue of this authority [*i.e.*, "endowment" and "holy anointing"], on the death of Joseph Smith, that President Young, as President of the quorum of the Twelve, presided over the Church."³⁹

In an important discourse on priesthood on 10 March 1844, the Prophet Joseph was recorded as saying: "The spirit power & calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the keys of the revelations ordinances, oracles powers & endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood & of the Kingdom of God on the Earth & to receive, obtain & perform all the ordinances belonging to the Kingdom of God even unto the sealing of the hearts of the hearts [*sic*] fathers unto the children & the hearts of the children unto the fathers even those who are in heaven."⁴⁰

Formally conferring the fulness of this, the sealing power of Elijah, completed the basic form of the priesthood endowment.⁴¹ In a real sense, however, the constant reshuffling and recombining of theological and scriptural images during these early years could easily be termed "the fulness that was never full." At each step of the way, Joseph Smith proclaimed he had "completed the organization of the Church," and "passed through all the necessary ceremonies," or restored the "highest order of the Melchisedek Priesthood," only to introduce more revelations and theological innovations creating yet new layers of ritual,

³⁷ Wilford Woodruff, *Historian's Private Journal*, 1858, typescript p. 24, original in LDS Church Archives.

³⁸ Table 1 is based upon independent research by Lisle G. Brown, especially with respect to the table's graphic design, Andrew F. Ehat, whose "Ehat Endowment Data Summary," cited in his "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), pp. 97-98, provides most of the dating, and my own research. The listing contains only names and dates for which documentation is fairly certain. Some of the names included are documented as having received one or more of these ordinances, but no precise date has been located.

³⁹ George Q. Cannon, sermon, 5 Dec. 1869, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: LDS Book Depot, 1855-86), 13:49 (hereafter cited as *JD*).

⁴⁰ Wilford Woodruff, 10 Mar. 1844, *Journal*; also cited in *WJS*, p. 329.

⁴¹ See Brigham Young's 26 Dec. 1845 comments cited in the heading to part II of this essay, recorded in Heber C. Kimball *Journal*, same date.

TABLE 1. KNOWN ENDOWMENTS, SEALINGS, AND SECOND ANOINTINGS
 DURING JOSEPH SMITH'S LIFETIME

<i>Second Anointing</i>	<i>Endowment</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Sealing</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Endowment</i>	<i>Second Anointing</i>
dbi*	4 May 42	James Adams	28 May 43	Harriet Adams	8 Oct 43	
	12 May 44	Almon Babbitt				
dnr*	28 Sep 43	John Bernhisel				
12 Nov 43	12 Oct 43	Reynolds Cahoon	nd*	Thirza Cahoon	29 Oct 43	12 Nov 43
dnr	3 Feb 44	William Clayton	22 Jul 43	Ruth Clayton		dnr
15 Nov 43	12 Oct 43	Alpheus Cutler	nd	Lois L. Cutler	29 Oct 43	15 Nov 43
				Sister Durphy	1 Oct 43	
	9 Oct 43	Joseph Fielding	nd	Hannah Fielding	1 Nov 43	
	11 May 44	John P. Greene				
25 Jan 44	2 Dec 43	Orson Hyde	dnr	Miranda N. Hyde	18 Feb 44	dnr
20 Jan 44	4 May 42	Heber C. Kimball	nd	Vilate Kimball	1 Nov 43	20 Jan 44
dnr	4 May 42	William Law	dnr	Jane Law	1 Oct 43	dnr
4 Feb 44	9 Dec 43	Cornelius Lott	20 Sep 43	Permilla Lott	23 Dec 43	4 Feb 44
	28 Sep 43	Amasa M. Lyman				
22 Oct 43	4 May 42	William Marks	nd	Rosanna Marks	1 Oct 43	22 Oct 43
	4 May 42	George Miller				
26 Feb 44	23 Dec 43	Isaac Morley	26 Feb 44	Lucy G. Morley	23 Dec 43	26 Feb 44
				Fanny Y. Murray	23 Dec 43	
26 Jan 44	23 Dec 43	Orson Pratt				
21 Jan 44	2 Dec 43	Parley P. Pratt	23 Jun 43	Mary Ann Pratt	nd	nd
2 Feb 44	9 Dec 43	William Phelps	2 Feb 44	Sally W. Phelps	23 Dec 43	2 Feb 44
nd	9 Dec 43	Levi Richards				
27 Jan 44	4 May 42	Willard Richards	29 May 43	Jenetta Richards	1 Nov 43	27 Jan 44
dnr	11 May 44	Sidney Rigdon				
31 Jan 44	2 Dec 43	George A. Smith	20 Jan 44	Bathsheba Smith	23 Dec 43	31 Jan 44
8 Oct 43	4 May 42	Hyrum Smith	8 Oct 43	Mary F. Smith	1 Oct 43	8 Oct 43
26 Feb 44	28 Sep 43	John Smith	nd	Clarissa Smith	8 Oct 43	26 Feb 44
				Lucy Mack Smith	8 Oct 43	12 Nov 43
28 Sep 43	5 May 42	Joseph Smith, Jr.	28 May 43	Emma Hale Smith	28 Sep 43	28 Sep 43
	17 Dec 43	Samuel H. Smith				
	12 May 44	William Smith				
nd	2 Dec 43	Orson Spencer	nd	Catherine Spencer	23 Dec 43	nd
30 Jan 44	28 Sep 43	John Taylor	30 Jan 44	Leonora Taylor	1 Nov 43	30 Jan 44
8 Oct 43	4 May 42	Hyrum Smith	29 May 43	Mercy Thompson	nd	dnr
27 Oct 43	4 May 42	Newel K. Whitney	21 Aug 42	Elizabeth Whitney	8 Oct 43	27 Oct 43
	14 May 44	Lyman Wight				
28 Jan 44	2 Dec 43	Wilford Woodruff	11 Nov 43	Phoebe Woodruff	23 Dec 43	28 Jan 44
dnr	28 Sep 43	Lucien Woodworth	nd	Phebe Woodworth	29 Oct 43	dnr
22 Nov 43	4 May 42	Brigham Young	29 May 43	Mary Ann Young	1 Nov 43	22 Nov 43
	3 Feb 44	Joseph Young		Jane A. Young	3 Feb 44	

*dbi="died before introduced"; dnr="did not receive" during Joseph Smith's lifetime; nd="no date" available, but probably received during Joseph Smith's lifetime; blank space=nothing known, or received after Joseph Smith's death. Name of the sealings represent plural marriages.

deposited on or integrated with the old.⁴² Centrally embedded in the evolution of the anointing ritual in early Mormon history (including passages from the Book of Mormon) was the theme of leadership.⁴³ As the ritual evolved, lay members of the Church advanced into the "inner circle," receiving ordinances and symbols formerly held only by Joseph Smith and his immediate circle, while Joseph and his associates moved on to higher kingdoms, more sure promises, and more secret rituals. Although change in the fundamental framework of ritual was frozen by Joseph Smith's death in June 1844, theologic perceptions dealing with certain aspects of the endowment — and, more particularly, the second anointing — underwent further modification.

II

Every man that gets his endowment . . . [has been] ordained to the Melchisedek Priesthood, which is the highest order of Priesthood . . . those who have come in here and have received their washing & anointing will be ordained Kings & Priests, and will then have received the fulness of the Priesthood, all that can be given on earth, for Brother Joseph said he had given us all that could be given to man on the earth.

Brigham Young, 1845

(Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 26 Dec. 1845)

Many aspiring to take control of the Church came to Nauvoo during the summer of 1844. One of these was Sidney Rigdon, formerly a counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency. Although Rigdon had received his endowment on 11 May 1844, he had not received his second anointing. Indeed, *none* of the major contenders to Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve — Sidney Rigdon, William Smith, James Jesse Strang, Lyman Wight, and later Joseph Smith III — had received this higher ordinance.⁴⁴ After Rig-

⁴² Although it oversimplifies this complex developmental process, Andrew F. Ehat has attempted to show how Joseph Smith's additions to the Kirtland endowment in Nauvoo did not disrupt the ultimate order of the ceremony. His listing of temple ordinances, based on the *History of the Church*, is intended to illustrate this point. Items first revealed in Nauvoo are italicized, while those found in both the Kirtland and Nauvoo ceremonies are not: (1) Washing of the body with water and perfumed alcohol (*set wording*); (2) *Sealing the washing*; (3) Anointing *the body* with oil; (4) Sealing the anointing (*set wording*); (5) *Aaronic portion of the endowment*; (6) *Melchizedek portion of the endowment*; (7) *Marriage for time and eternity*; (8) *Anointing with oil*; and (9) *Sealing the anointing*; (10) Washing of feet (cited in *WJS*, pp. 140–41, note 6; and "Introduction of Temple Ordinances," p. 169).

⁴³ Examples of this idea clearly can be seen in the frequent use of the word "anoint" in the Book of Mormon with regard to kings (Jac. 1:9; Eth. 6:22, 27, 9:4, 14, 15, 21, 22, 10:10, 16), with ordained ministers in the early Doctrine and Covenants (68:20–21; 109:35, 53; 121:16), and with Joseph Smith as the anointed leader with the sealing power (D&C 124:57; 132:7, 18, 19).

⁴⁴ For the relationship of these contenders to the second anointing and the succession issue, see Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), pp. 189ff, esp. fig. 1.

don's attempt to become "guardian" of the Church failed in August 1844, he tried to undermine the authority of the Quorum of the Twelve by administering his own ceremony of washing and anointing to a group of dissidents. Primarily due to this action, Rigdon was excommunicated from the Church on 8 September 1844.⁴⁵

Little actual ordinance work was done for a year or more after Joseph Smith's death. The Saints donated money, time, art, furnishings, and other material to make the temple attic ready for use;⁴⁶ and in late 1845, Church leaders began to prepare to administer the initial endowment to members. On 10 December 1845 the endowment was given for the first time in the temple. Its first recipients were members of the "Holy Order," who desired "to go through with our washings and Anointing again in the Temple of our God."⁴⁷ Between this date and 7 February 1846 when Brigham Young officially closed the temple, approximately 5,200 members were endowed.⁴⁸

The endowment that these initiates received, as described by Heber C. Kimball's journal for the period, describes a sequence of ceremonial rituals, enactments, and words taking place within the framework of a processional movement from room to room to symbolize progression from birth to exaltation.⁴⁹

A special altar for sealing ordinances was dedicated on 7 January 1846.⁵⁰ On January 8 the fulness of the priesthood was then administered for the first time in the Nauvoo Temple. Once again, among the earliest to receive the second anointing were those who had already received it from Joseph Smith. The first were Heber C. Kimball and his wife, Vilate Murray. Brigham Young, who performed the ordinance, and eight other observers gathered in Brigham's Room No. 1, donned special temple clothing, sang a hymn, and proceeded with the ordinance which involved anointing and the pronouncement of a blessing by Brigham Young. Among other things, he promised Heber C. Kimball

⁴⁵ See Lisle G. Brown, "The Holy Order in Nauvoo," unpublished manuscript, pp. 12-17; copy in my possession.

⁴⁶ For details concerning the construction of the Nauvoo Temple, including the administration of endowments in 1842 as well as December 1845-February 1846, see Brown, "The Sacred Departments for Temple Work in Nauvoo," and Ehat, "They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet."

⁴⁷ Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 9 Dec. 1845.

⁴⁸ *History of the Church*, 7:543-580; the last entry on page 580 gives two possible figures for the final day's ordinance count: the Seventy's Record would bring the cumulative total to 5,210; George A. Smith's estimate would boost this to 5,634 endowments. The lower figure is probably more representative, however, for by using a third source (Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 7 Feb. 1846) the cumulative total would be 5,154.

⁴⁹ Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 11 Dec. 1845. Compare Increase McGee and Maria Van Dusen's exposé, *Positively True: A Dialogue Between Adam and Eve, the Lord and the Devil, Called the Endowment* (Albany: C. Kilmer, 1847).

⁵⁰ *History of the Church*, 7:566. In addition to journal accounts, another published description of this altar dedication is in Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo, and Incidents from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Woman's Exponent* 12 (1 July 1883): 10. These descriptions were taken from Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 7 Jan. 1846.

the “blessing of the Holy resurrection, Even to the Eternal Godhead.” Heber’s wife was then anointed “a Queen & Priestess unto her husband” and received the same blessing as he did.⁵¹

Within the next few days, other leading brethren and their wives also received their second anointing. When the temple was closed on 7 February 1846, over two thousand couples had been sealed for time and eternity, and just under six hundred persons had received the fulness of the priesthood through their second anointing. In addition to Brigham Young, at least nineteen other men were delegated authority to perform second anointings.⁵² On a typical day, six to twelve couples received this ordinance. A few women were sealed to their current husband for time but as a queen to a deceased man (usually Joseph Smith) for eternity. For the first time several polygamous second anointing sealings were also performed.⁵³

In actual practice the second anointing as performed for couples by an officiator was the first of two parts comprising the fulness of the priesthood ceremony. The second part was private, without witnesses, and involved only the husband and wife. Its significance related to the resurrection of the dead as Heber C. Kimball notes.⁵⁴ In this part of the ordinance, the wife symbolically prepared her husband for his death and resurrection, a ceremony that gave the wife a claim on her husband for herself in the resurrection.⁵⁵ Kimball’s journal

⁵¹ Book of Anointings, 8 Jan. 1846, pp. 3–4, photocopy of holograph, original in LDS Church Archives. The “Book of Anointings,” a special record, lists all recipients of the second anointing in the Nauvoo Temple, including texts of several of the personal blessings received with the anointings (LDS Church Archives). Kimball and his wife, Vilate, originally received the second anointing on 20 Jan. 1844, and the second part of the fulness of the priesthood ceremony on 1 April 1844. Based on our discussion at the end of part 1 of this essay, it is possible that Kimball’s ordination to the “Eternal Godhead” reflected an elite modification for this early Mormon leader’s second anointing, which normally anointed a recipient to godhood; Brigham Young also was blessed, in his second anointing by Heber C. Kimball, to “attain unto [the] Eternal Godhead,” as was his wife, Mary Ann. Aside from these references, no other evidence is presently known to support this supposition. It is noteworthy that one week prior to the commencement of second anointing conferrals in the Nauvoo Temple, Heber C. Kimball recorded a “temple wedding” between William A. Young and Adelia C. Clark wherein Brigham Young “pronounced them Husband & Wife, and sealed them together as such for time and for all eternity, and also sealed them up to eternal life, against all sins, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the shedding of innocent blood, & pronounced various blessings upon them.” (Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 1 Jan. 1846; the Book of Anointings contains no record of a second anointing for William G. Young and Adelia C. Clark.)

⁵² Based on the Book of Anointings, typescript, original in LDS Church Archives, the men performing second anointings included Ezra T. Benson, Zebedee Coltrin, Winslow Farr, William Huntington, Orson Hyde, Aaron Johnson, Heber C. Kimball, Amasa M. Lyman, George Miller, Isaac Morley, William W. Phelps, Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, Charles C. Rich, William Smith, William Snow, Daniel Spencer, Orson Spencer, John Taylor, and Brigham Young.

⁵³ Book of Anointings, typescript.

⁵⁴ Heber C. Kimball, Journal, “Strange Events.”

⁵⁵ Compare the blessing Hyrum Smith gave John Taylor on 23 July 1843, that “shall be sealed upon your head in the day that you shall be anointed & your body prepared for its

refers to Mary washing and anointing Jesus' feet and may be derived from a speculative belief taught by some early Mormons that Jesus Christ married Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus.⁵⁶

A number of historical records indicate that the anointed husband and wife might perform the second part of the fulness of the priesthood ordinance from a few days to as much as a few years after an officiator performed the second anointing.⁵⁷

These brief weeks in Nauvoo and its temple represent a unique concentration of second anointings. Although the endowment was sporadically administered after the Saints trekked westward, no available records or diaries indicate that the higher ordinance of fulness was given for over two decades.

III

It would seem to be necessary that there should be more care taken in the administration of the ordinances to the Saints in order that those who had not proven themselves worthy might not partake of the fulness of the anointings until they had proven themselves worthy thereof, upon being faithful to the initiatory principles; as great carelessness and a lack of appreciation had been manifested by many who had partaken of those sacred ordinances.

John Taylor, 12 Oct. 1883

(Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book)

As the Church and its members adjusted to their new environment, initial emphasis on physical survival shifted to more spiritual activities, such as completing personal and Church histories and doing temple work. The Endowment House was dedicated by Heber C. Kimball and endowments were first

burial" (typescript from Patriarchal Blessing Book 3, p. 144, original in LDS Church Archives). For biblical accounts of Jesus Christ's anointing for his burial see Matt. 26:6-12, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8.

⁵⁶ See Ogden Kraut, *Jesus Was Married* (n.p., 1969) for a compilation of early LDS citations on this belief. A more scholarly analysis of this question is William E. Phipps, *Was Jesus Married?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), and William E. Phipps, "The Case for a Married Jesus," *DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT* 7 (Winter 1972): 44-49.

⁵⁷ Some journal entries which document this time separation between the first and second parts of the fulness of the priesthood ordinance include Heber C. Kimball (cited in text above); Phineas Richards, *Journal*, typescript entries for 22 Jan. 1846, 1 Feb. 1846, original in LDS Church Archives; Robert McQuarrie, *Journal*, typescript entries for 13 Nov. 1890, 1 June 1894, original in LDS Church Archives; William H. Smart, *Diary*, typescript entries for 31 May 1901, 20 June 1901, Western Americana, Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; and Sylvester Q. Cannon, *Journal*, typescript entries for 30 Sept. 1904, and 28 Oct. 1904, original in LDS Church Archives.

administered there on 5 May 1855.⁵⁸ Another decade would pass, however, before second anointings were resumed. The explanation for this continued hiatus is unknown. Unquestionably the general subject continued to be discussed. On 26 November 1857, for example, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his diary that, "In company with G A Smith I called upon President Brigham Young and asked council about publishing the endowments or an outline of it telling the time when the Twelve received their 2nd Anointing & about the organization of the Council of 50 He gave his consent for us to publish an account of it so that the Saints might understand it."⁵⁹ A few weeks later, on December 18 as he worked to update the official history of the Church, Woodruff recorded a few relevant procedural comments by George A. Smith who noted "that Joseph taught that but one king & Priest could be anointed at one meeting in a private room dedicated by permission to anoint in, but one person could be anointed in a day but in the Temple several could be anointed in a day But at each anointing the meeting was dismissed and then came together." In Brigham Young's view, however, "When the Temple is finished & a place duly prepared we should not be confined to any particular Number in sealing and anointing."⁶⁰

Whether President Young initially intended to await the completion of a new temple before reinstating second anointings is not clear. However, by early January 1867, ten years before the Saint George Temple was dedicated, he decided to resume this highest ordinance of Mormonism. On 26 December 1866 President Young met in council with the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve in a session which touched on the subject of endowments and second anointings. In this meeting he clarified several procedural issues before reinstating the ordinance of the second anointing. Wilford Woodruff's diary for that procedural meeting on 26 December reports that President Young described "the order of the 2d Anointings"; the initiates would be dressed in temple clothes while "the Administrator" could wear street clothing or temple clothing.⁶¹ A decade later he repeated these instructions to Wilford Woodruff.⁶²

Furthermore, "there should be but one man anointed at any one meeting if more than one man is anointed in a day They should come together and open by Prayer as though their had not been any meeting before and thus continue to the end."⁶³ Wilford Woodruff's journal continues: "President Young said when a woman was anointed a Queen to a good man and he died & the woman was sealed to another man for time it was not necessary for her to be anointed a Queen again but if she was anointed a Queen to a man who was

⁵⁸ Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 5 May 1855, LDS Church Archives.

⁵⁹ Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 26 Nov. 1857, LDS Church Archives.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 18 Dec. 1857.

⁶¹ Ibid., 26 Dec. 1866.

⁶² Ibid., 15 Jan. 1877.

⁶³ Ibid., 26 Dec. 1866.

not worthy of a wife & she is sealed to another man she should be anointed a Queen unto him. When a good man dies & his wives have not been anointed Queens unto him they may be anointed Queens to him after his death without any Proxy."⁶⁴ This last comment suggests that the second anointing was, at least during Brigham Young's administration, the only vicarious ordinance wherein a living proxy was not always required.

The next day, the First Presidency and most of the Twelve consecrated olive oil for use in administering the second anointing. And on 31 December 1866, Daniel H. Wells and his four wives received their second anointing from Brigham Young who had perfumed the consecrated oil for this ordinance. As Wilford Woodruff recorded, "The brethren rejoiced at the commencement again of the administration of these ordinances which had not been administered since they were in the Temple at Nauvoo."⁶⁵

This event marked the beginning of a new period of conferring the fulness of the priesthood. George Q. Cannon and his three wives received their second anointing the next day, on 1 January 1867; Joseph A. Young received his on January 2; Brigham Young, Jr. on January 3, Joseph F. Smith and his two wives on January 4; and many others followed from January through June 1867.⁶⁶

Brigham Young's views about the number of persons to receive the second anointing on a single day apparently changed slightly during the initial week, for on 2 January 1867, "it was decided by Presidet Young that we dress & offer up the signs of the Holy Priesthood before we give the 2d anointing & only anoint one man & his wives in one day at one place."⁶⁷ Eight weeks later, on February 26th, President Young again revised the procedure: "We should not anoint ownly one man & his family at one meeting. if any other women are to be anointed to another man it must be a separate meeting, there may [be] two meetings in a day at one place."⁶⁸

After the ceremony was recorded in written form, President Young, then in the last year of his life, appointed Woodruff to preside over the Saint George

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 30–31 Dec. 1866. Compare Elijah Larkin Journal, 31 Dec. 1866, Lee Library.

⁶⁶ The cited names are found in Woodruff Journal, 31 Dec. 1866, 1–4 Jan. 1867. In addition to Woodruff's entries for 1867, other private journals and diaries, many available in the LDS Church Archives and Lee Library, record the administration of second anointings, including Elijah Larkin, Journal (31 Dec. 1866), Thomas Evans Jeremy, Journal (30 April 1867), Jesse N. Smith, Journal (3 June 1867), John Lyman Smith, Diary (30 July 1867), L. John Nuttall, Journal (23 Sept. 1867), Lorenzo Brown, Diary (2 Oct. 1867), Sylvester H. Earl, Diary (1867), John Lyman Smith, Diary (23 Oct. 1868), Henry Eyring, Journal (24 Feb. 1877), J. D. T. McAllister, Journal (10 April 1877), Samuel H. Rogers, Journal (1 Feb. 1878), Oliver B. Huntington, Journal (12 Jan. 1881), Samuel Bateman, Diary (30 Nov. 1887), and Thomas Memmott, Journal (13 Dec. 1889 and 13 Feb. 1890). An important published account of the second anointing is Mrs. T. B. H. (Fanny) Stenhouse, *An Englishwoman in Utah: The Story of a Life's Experience in Mormonism* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1880), pp. 320–21.

⁶⁷ Woodruff, Journal, 2 Jan. 1867.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 26 Feb. 1867.

Temple which had opened earlier that year and take charge of its affairs. In so doing, Woodruff recorded that the President gave “me power and authority to give Second Anointings, and seal women to me as I might be led by the Spirit of God.”⁶⁹ Consistent with Woodruff’s emphasis on vicarious work for the dead, vicarious second anointings were conducted in the Saint George Temple.⁷⁰

Six years later on 28 April 1883, Church President John Taylor announced a revelation reestablishing the School of the Prophets for “all such as are worthy” — and thereby raised several interesting questions. At a preliminary organizational meeting on 25 July 1883, George Q. Cannon, counselor in the First Presidency, and George Reynolds, secretary to the First Presidency, were appointed to “get together all papers and information that they could obtain relating to the former Schools of the Prophets that were organized under the direction of the Presidents Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, so that the School might be properly organized in accordance with the designs of the Almighty.”

They presented their findings to the First Presidency and the Twelve on 2 August 1883.⁷¹ Understandably, in view of the time elapsed and complexity of the intervening history, there was confusion about how all the previous initiation rites and ordinances fit together. The August 2 minutes taken by John Irvine record George Q. Cannon’s remarks:

Now, whether the washing of feet [at the original Kirtland School] was suspended by the Endowment or not is a question in my mind, and probably, in all our minds. But it seems to me clear that after Peter, at least, had received an uncommon bestowal of power at the Transfiguration, that the Savior even after that washed his feet and the feet of the rest and commanded them that as they seen him do so should they do to one another. It was one of the last ordinances he performed in their midst. Brother Nuttall whispers to me a thing with which you are no doubt all familiar; that in the washing that takes place in the first endowment, they are washed that they might *become* clean from the blood of this generation — that is, I suppose, in the same way they are ordained *to be* Kings and Priests — that ordinance does not make them clean from the blood of this generation anymore than it makes them Kings and Priests. If they fully received of another endowment [i.e., the second anointing], a fulness of that power, and the promises are fulfilled in the bestowal of the power upon them. (Emphasis in original.)

Further discussion led to the conclusion that the original School in Kirtland had not used the “greeting” outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 88. Moreover, it was decided that the Kirtland School’s washing ceremony was not intended to be a preparatory ordinance for the Kirtland Temple. Apostle Erastus

⁶⁹ Typescript of signed statement by Wilford Woodruff, 26 March 1833, microfilm in James G. Bleak Papers, Lee Library.

⁷⁰ Samuel Hollister Rogers, Journal, typescript entry for 1 Feb. 1878, original in Lee Library.

⁷¹ Salt Lake [City] School of the Prophets Minute Book, typescript entry for 2 Aug. 1883, original in LDS Church Archives.

Snow recalled: "I did not understand [it] to be a preparatory work . . . I understood it rather as a finishing work, and the words used in most cases according to the best of my recollection, were: 'I wash you and pronounce you clean from the blood of this generation.'" He defined "finishing" as the last part of the Kirtland endowment — "something extra."⁷²

President Taylor subsequently decided that the ordinance of washing of feet could be appropriately used to initiate individuals into the School of the Prophets. The "form of ceremony" decided upon by President Taylor was similar to that used in the Kirtland endowment and to that used in Nauvoo to confer the higher blessings in its invocation of proper authority, the place of this ritual as "an introductory ordinance," and a pronouncing of blessings upon the recipient. The ordinance was, of course, strongly reminiscent of the ritual performed by the Savior with his apostles during the Last Supper. School minutes state that President Taylor occasionally inserted "And I say unto thee thy sins are forgiven thee." He also specified that "the washing of feet is not the same ordinance associated with this as attended to administration of Endowments in the Kirtland Temple . . . This is a distinct thing and is introductory to the School of the Prophets. The other was an endowment."⁷³ The exact purpose of the washing of feet may have thus been primarily a reminder of their responsibility to be united and to provide selfless service.

President Taylor asserted that the Church was then (in 1883) operating on a "higher plane,"⁷⁴ apparently higher than that of the School initiation and the Kirtland endowment half a century earlier. His 1883 decision to allow the washing of feet as an initiation to the school, complete with the pronouncement of cleansing from the blood of this generation, suggests that only those who had received their second anointing, or were worthy to receive it, were admitted to the school since the preparatory endowment washed initiates only *to become* clean from the blood of their generation. After the complete order of temple ordinances was established in Nauvoo, it took conferral of the fulness of the priesthood to completely "cleanse" an individual from this blood. It would seem that if a member had not received the second anointing but was initiated into the 1883 school, the washing of feet would confirm earlier "cleansing" blessings from the preparatory endowment but would not affirm other promises given in the second anointing. Those who had previously received the fulness of the priesthood would merely be renewing blessings already received with the second anointing. A further requirement of those entering the 1883 school, besides the endowment and temple marriage, was "celestial" or plural marriage.⁷⁵

⁷² School of the Prophets Minutes 27 Sept. 1883.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12 Oct. 1883.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 Sept. 1883.

⁷⁵ This requirement would have been consistent with a revelation received by President John Taylor on 13 Oct. 1882 that all Church leaders, both local and Churchwide were to obey "my law" — *i.e.*, the law of plural marriage — or they would not "be considered worthy

President Taylor, reflecting on some of the foregoing uncertainties, explained at a meeting of the school on 12 October 1883:

The reason why things are in the shape they are is because Joseph felt called upon to confer all ordinances connected with the Priesthood. He felt in a hurry on account of certain premonition [*sic*] that he had concerning his death, and was very desirous to impart the endowments and all the ordinances thereof to the Priesthood during his life time, and it would seem to be necessary that there should be more care taken in the administration of the ordinances to the Saints in order that those who had not proven themselves worthy might not partake of the fulness of the anointings until they had proven themselves worthy thereof, upon being faithful to the initiatory principles; as great carelessness and a lack of appreciation had been manifested by many who had partaken of these sacred ordinances.

The President concluded, "Had Joseph Smith lived he would have had much more to say on many of those points which he was prevented from doing by his death."⁷⁶

IV

No man receives a fullness of the Melchisedek Priesthood till he has received his second anointings. Men recommended for this sacred ordinance should be men of God whose faith and integrity are unquestioned.

Joseph F. Smith
(in Anthony W. Ivins, Diary, 8 April 1901)

Once the basic format was established, second anointings were regularly administered in the temples at Saint George and Logan, and later at Salt Lake City and Manti; the ordinance typically was performed by the temple president, who, with the exception of Wilford Woodruff at Saint George for some years, was not an apostle. During the 1883 discussions in the School of the Prophets, President Taylor indicated that too many members had received the higher ordinances of the temple before they had proven themselves worthy. He and George Q. Cannon felt it would be advisable for the endowment to be administered in separate stages, with the fulness of the priesthood given only after the candidate had proven himself or herself worthy of the higher blessing.⁷⁷ Because of the proliferation of second anointings, the First Presidency issued, over the next few decades, several procedural requirements.

On 7 October 1889, six months after he was sustained president of the Church, Woodruff "spoke in regard to second anointing [*sic*] and said the Presidents of Stakes were to be judges of who were worthy to receive them." He also indicated that "it was an ordinance of the eternal world which be-

to hold my priesthood." "Revelation," cited in B. H. Roberts, *Life of John Taylor* (Salt Lake City, 1892, pp. 349–51. See also John Taylor, 6 Oct. 1884, *Journal of Discourses*, 25:309.

⁷⁶ School of the Prophets Minutes, 12 Oct. 1883.

⁷⁷ School of the Prophets Minutes, 2 Aug. 1883, 27 Sept. 1883.

longed particularly to old men."⁷⁸ Although stake presidents were shortly thereafter given final signatory authority for general temple recommends, a 6 November 1891 First Presidency directive indicated that second anointings were still to be given final approval only by the president of the Church.⁷⁹

In 1901, Lorenzo Snow, fourth Church president, stated "that persons who are recommended for second anointings should be those who have made an exceptional record, that they are persons who will never apostatize."⁸⁰ Other early twentieth-century First Presidency writings and correspondence⁸¹ indicates that at various times the following criteria of worthiness were applied:

- (1) Unquestionable and unshaken integrity to the work of the Lord.
- (2) "Valient in the defense of the truth," "active in all good works," have borne "the heat and burden of the day, and endured faithfully to the end."
- (3) Obedience to commandments such as tithing, law of chastity, honesty, etc.
- (4) Age was to be considered, but a member did not need to be "old" to receive the ordinance; recipients, however, typically were over fifty years old.
- (5) Candidates had to have "gathered with the body of the Church." Faithful "non-gatherers" would be "dealt with by the authority on the other side of the veil."
- (6) Candidates could not be guilty of any major sins — e.g., a man who committed adultery after receiving his endowment would not be recommended, even after full repentance.⁸²

⁷⁸ Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, typescript entry for 7 Oct. 1889, vol. 11, p. 129, original in Lee Library; see also Cannon's journal entry for 18 Aug. 1893, vol. 17, p. 94, for a similar comment on stake presidents' authority to recommend candidates for second anointings.

⁷⁹ Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, 6 Nov. 1891, To the Presidents of Stakes and Bishops of Wards, LDS Church Archives; also cited in James R. Clark ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833-1964*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 3:228; hereafter cited as *MFP*). A similar circular letter was released just a few days later on 10 Nov. 1891 which was identical except for the omission of any mention of second anointings; also cited in *MFP*, 3:229.

⁸⁰ Anthony W. Ivins, Journal, typescript entry for 8 April 1901, original in Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁸¹ See, for example, Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, Anthon H. Lund to C. R. Hakes, 1 Aug. 1902; Smith, Winder, and Lund to S. L. Chipman, 16 June 1905; Smith and Winder to David John [and] Joseph B. Keeler, 18 March 1902; Smith, Winder, and Lund to C. N. Lund, 21 Nov. 1906; Smith, Winder, and Lund to Lewis Anderson, 14 March 1907; Smith, Winder, and Lund to Oleen N. Stohl, 22 May 1908; Smith, Winder, and Lund to Isaac Smith, 16 Feb. 1909; Joseph F. Smith, "Temple Instructions to the Bishops," 1918, in *MFP*, 5:112; and "Special Instructions to the Stake President," for 1901-21. All of these documents are in Confidential Research Files.

⁸² Isaac C. Haight, who, according to tradiitonal sources, was excommunicated for authorizing the Mountain Meadows Massacre, was later rebaptized and died en route to the temple to receive his second anointing.

- (7) Candidates did not have to be Church officers, but it was expected that officers such as apostles, stake presidents, high councilmen, bishops, and patriarchs would be worthy to receive the ordinance.
- (8) Candidates for posthumous second anointings had to have received their endowment during their lifetime, and therefore must have been members of the Church as well.
- (9) Usually candidates must have been married and sealed in the temple. Living bachelors ordinarily were not allowed to have deceased women anointed to them; single living women were more frequently anointed to deceased men.

Specific guidance on women's recommends varied somewhat. During Wilford Woodruff's administration, the rule was "not to permit a woman to be anointed to a man unless she had lived with him as his wife."⁸³ According to a First Presidency letter in 1900 (during President Snow's administration), this "rule" was a "restriction of the rule in such case which [was] obtained during the lifetime of President Brigham Young and John Taylor." After reviewing this policy, the First Presidency decided to "restore the practice" as follows: "Any woman who has been sealed to a man in life or by proxy whether she has lived with him or not, shall have the privilege of being anointed to him inasmuch as he shall have had his second blessings."⁸⁴ Joseph F. Smith, fifth president of the Church, followed this new rule in 1902,⁸⁵ but by 1907 he and his counselors John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund wrote: "It is not customary for woman [*sic*] to be sealed to men, to whom they may have been sealed after death, but with whom they had not lived in their lifetime as husband and wife . . . or one flesh, to use the scriptural expression."⁸⁶ One 1904 First Presidency letter denied conferral of the second anointing upon a woman whose deceased husband was not considered worthy of a recommend due to his indifference toward temple work prior to his death.⁸⁷

⁸³ Lorenzo Snow, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith to John D. T. McAllister, 14 April 1900, Lorenzo Snow Letterpress Book, Confidential Research Files. See also Wilford Woodruff to James H. Martineau, 26 Oct. 1887, *ibid*.

⁸⁴ Snow, Cannon, and Smith to J. D. T. McAllister, 14 April 1900, *ibid*.

⁸⁵ First Presidency letter of 11 June 1902, recorded in J. D. T. McAllister Journal, typescript entry for 31 Dec. 1902, original in Lee Library.

⁸⁶ Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund to Lewis Anderson, 14 March 1907, Confidential Research Files.

⁸⁷ Smith, Winder, and Lund to Thomas R. Bassett, 4 Nov. 1904, *ibid*. Other letters containing directives on second anointings for females are the First Presidency to Thomas E. Bassett, 5 Jan. 1902; Smith, Winder, and Lund to Thomas E. Bassett, 16 Nov. 1903; Smith, Winder, and Lund to C. N. Lund, 21 Nov. 1906; Smith, Winder, and Lund to William Budge, 22 May 1908. With respect to the rule that a man and wife were to have been endowed members during their lifetimes in order to receive the second anointing posthumously, the First Presidency counseled one stake president that persons who had died before the Church was organized could be recommended, provided that adequate evidence was

The recommend itself was usually initiated by a candidate's stake president. It is not known to what extent stake presidents were encouraged to submit recommends for second anointings to the Church president. Evidence suggests that some men and women had requested second anointings prior to the 1890s.⁸⁸ One letter from Wilford Woodruff to Salt Lake Stake President Angus M. Cannon suggests that local initiative was occasionally exercised.⁸⁹ Bishops, however, were discouraged from submitting such recommends.⁹⁰ If a stake president felt a couple worthy of the ordinance — almost presupposing that all stake presidents had previously received the second anointing — they filled out an ordinary temple recommend without indicating on it that it was for a second anointing. They then submitted the recommend together with a short biographical summary of the candidates directly to the Church president, a procedure followed for both the living and the dead. Only after the Church president returned the signed recommend would the stake president then contact the candidates, who usually knew nothing of their candidacy. Recommended candidates were instructed not to discuss their second anointing with anyone outside the temple, and stake presidents were directed not to send more than one family per week to the temple for completion of the ordinance to maintain this confidentiality.⁹¹

available to determine their worthiness. See Smith, Winder, and Lund to Oleen N. Stohl, 22 May 1908, Confidential Research Files.

⁸⁸ For example, see John Taylor to Eliza Perry Benson, 14 March 1886, John Taylor Letterpress Book, 1886–87, LDS Church Archives; John Hawkins to John Taylor, 6 June 1886, John Taylor Letter Ms. File, LDS Church Archives; Benjamin F. Johnson to First Presidency, 9 Dec. 1886, Office of the First Presidency Journal, L. John Nuttall Papers, LDS Church Archives; Eliza R. Snow to First Presidency, 27 Dec. 1886, *ibid.*; and Wilford Woodruff to M. W. Merrill, 29 March 1888, LDS Archives. (Note: most of the letters cited through the balance of this essay are in restricted files with various titles. These are cited from a compilation of extracts of First Presidency letters entitled "Historical Department — Confidential Research Files 1950–1974," LDS Church Archives vault, copy in Archives and Manuscripts, Lee Library.) One request from Benjamin F. Johnson to John Taylor, 29 Jan. 1887, LDS Church Archives "as[ked for] the Priviledge of 2d anointing for my son James Fransis, who is the Present Bishop at Tempe. . . . He is over 30 years of age and appears really one of the comeing young men of Zion." (Confidential Research File).

⁸⁹ Wilford Woodruff to Angus M. Cannon, 24 Jan. 1888, *ibid.* See letter from Smith, Winder, and Lund to President Moses W. Taylor, 4 Jan. 1902: "We would say that it is not expected that people shall be found asking that this most sacred ordinance shall be administered to them, but you should take pains to seek out the worthy people under your jurisdiction, and this by means of your counselors and Bishops," *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, 18 Aug. 1893, vol. 17, p. 94, Lee Library; Smith, Winder, and Lund to Moses W. Taylor, 4 Jan. 1902; George F. Gibbs (Secretary to the First Presidency) to Ira W. Hinckley, 9 Dec. 1905; Smith, Winder, and Lund to Thomas E. Bassett, 4 Feb. 1902; George F. Gibbs to Alma Merrill, 14 Jan. 1908; Winder and Lund to Don C. Walker, 24 March 1909; Joseph F. Smith, "Temple Instructions to the Bishops," 1918 (also cited in *MFP*, 5:112). All documents in Confidential Research Files.

⁹¹ Smith, Winder, and Lund to Thomas E. Bassett, 4 Feb. 1902; Smith, Winder, and Lund to C. R. Hakes, 1 Aug. 1902; Smith, Winder, and Lund to J. S. Paige, Jr., 22 Sept. 1903; George F. Gibbs to Alma Merrill, 14 Jan. 1908; Winder and Lund to Don C. Walker, 24 March 1909; and "Special Instructions to the Stake President," for 1901–21, *ibid.*

Consequently, it is unclear precisely what long-term effect the second anointing had upon the lives of its recipients, nor, for that matter is it known to what degree the conferral of godhood by the second anointing was held to be conditional or unconditional. Most of the earliest nineteenth-century comments explicitly dealing with the second anointing clearly imply that the ordinance was then held to be unconditional. As early as August 1843 Joseph Smith had expanded on the Calvinist doctrine of the elect in a sermon containing overtones of predestination. On August 13, the Prophet reportedly said, "When a seal is put upon the father and mother it secures their posterity so that they cannot be lost but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father." Another report recorded: ". . . the Covenant sealed on the fore heads of the Parents secured the children from falling that they shall all sit upon thrones as one with the God-head joint Heirs of God with Jesus Christ."⁹² This promise seems to have been invoked in Heber C. Kimball's personal second anointing blessing given by Brigham Young on 8 January 1846 related to his posterity.⁹³

Indeed, even the promises of godhood outlined in Joseph Smith's revelation on celestial marriage (now D&C 132) seemed unconditionally dependent upon having received the key ordinances of celestial marriage and being "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power" (v. 18), a reference to the second anointing. Joseph equated this "sealing" with the "Holy Spirit of promise" in a 10 March 1844 sermon as "i e *Elijah*." He then explained, "to obtain this sealing is to make our calling and election sure."⁹⁴ Indeed, "the power of Elijah is sufficient to make our calling & Election sure."⁹⁵ This sealing power of Elijah, the power to seal on earth and in heaven, even the "Holy Spirit of promise," was bestowed "by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and keys of the priesthood are conferred)" (D&C 132:7).⁹⁶

⁹² William Clayton, *Diary*, 13 Aug. 1843, and Franklin D. Richards' "Scriptural Items," as cited in *WJS*, pp. 241–42, originals in LDS Church Archives. Compare *History of the Church*, 5:530–31. In *WJS*, p. 300, Ehat and Cook argue that this effect upon the posterity of parents was conditional, not unconditional. Their comment is based only upon the Howard and Martha Coray Notebook, cited in *WJS*, p. 241; furthermore, they assume the "sealing" spoken of by Joseph Smith is that of marriage. The actual "seal" discussed, however, was that of the Holy Spirit of Promise or the second anointing, not on a couple's marriage. This, as well as the comments cited in the narrative clearly show that Joseph Smith intended to state that the sealing unconditionally affected a couple's posterity after this life.

⁹³ Book of Anointings, 8 Jan. 1846.

⁹⁴ "Scriptural Items," cited in *WJS*, p. 335; emphasis in original.

⁹⁵ Wilford Woodruff, *Journal*, same date, cited in *WJS*, p. 330; see also D&C 124:124. This contemporary interpretation of equating the "Holy Spirit of promise" with the "calling and election sure" doctrine, particularly with respect to its conferral by a human intermediary, has since undergone significant reinterpretation.

⁹⁶ The ultimate receipt of this powerful sealing authority from a sole human intermediary, Joseph Smith, represented a striking departure from Joseph Smith's earlier caution against

The unconditional promise of exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom as gods and goddesses inherent in this priesthood sealing ordinance of Elijah was weighty indeed, yet so was the sole postmortal alternative: banishment as sons and daughters of perdition for whom there is no forgiveness in this life or in the hereafter.⁹⁷ The sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise seemingly did not leave recipients of the second anointing eligible for the graded degrees of judgment outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 76: they would be either gods or devils.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:26–27 implies that such persons would be deprived of godhood only if they committed the unpardonable sin: i.e., “. . . murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death.”⁹⁸ This would seem to give license to commit a wide variety of sins including adultery, rape, incest, theft, extortion, etc., and still be guaranteed godhood after “they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption.”⁹⁹

Themes of the unconditional nature of the second anointing occasionally appeared in public sermons of Church authorities in Utah. On 7 April 1855, Orson Pratt stated,

But we have no promise, unless we endure in faith unto the end In speaking of this, I will qualify my language by saying, that the Saint who has been sealed unto eternal life and falls in transgression and does not repent, but dies in his sin, will be afflicted and tormented after he leaves this vale of tears until the day of redemption; but having been sealed with the spirit of promise through the ordinances of the house of God, those things which have been sealed upon his head will be realized by him in the morning of the resurrection.¹⁰⁰

Pratt's September 1860 comments on this subject were given in the same vein: “This would seem to be as near an unconditional promise as can well be made to mortals. But this is not altogether unconditional, for there are some exceptions; but it would come as near as anything we have ever read of.”¹⁰¹ And in

the two great abominations of all Christian primitivists, papism and priestcraft; see Susan Curtis Mernitz, “Palmyra Revised,” pp. 33–35.

⁹⁷ See Brigham Young, 8 Aug. 1852, *JD*, 3:93.

⁹⁸ It is possible that some early Mormons may have extended this deprivation of godhood to anyone who committed the unpardonable sin; John D. Lee's recollection of the deliberations preceding the Mountain Meadows massacre describes the concern of those involved that by killing the women and children, they might be guilty of shedding innocent blood. This task was left to the Indians so that “it would be certain that no Mormon would be guilty of shedding *innocent blood* — if it should happen that there was any innocent blood in the company that were to die.” John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; or The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee* (St. Louis: Brand & Comuany, 1877), p. 237; emphasis in original. Lee received his second anointing 17 Jan. 1846, John D. Lee, Diary, type-script entry for same date, original in LDS Church Archives.

⁹⁹ This passage of scripture may have provided some theoretical basis for the latter-day doctrine of blood atonement preached by several nineteenth-century Church authorities.

¹⁰⁰ *JD*, 2:260.

¹⁰¹ 16 Sept. 1860, *JD*, 8:311–312.

November 1867, Brigham Young affirmed, "When men and women have travelled to a certain point in their labors in this life, God sets a seal upon them that they never can forsake their God or His kingdom; for, rather than they should do this, He will at once take them to Himself."¹⁰²

Despite these affirmations of unconditionality, however, others were concerned that those who had received the second anointing might see it as a license to commit any sin short of the unpardonable one. These later expressions concerning the second anointing's conditional nature were not only more frequent than comments about its unconditional nature, but these conditional expressions implicitly or explicitly indicated that the second anointing could be invalidated by actions less serious than the sin against the Holy Ghost. Heber C. Kimball, for instance, graphically stated:

Some will come with great zeal and anxiety, saying, "I want my endowments; I want my washings and anointings; I want my blessings; I wish to be sealed up to eternal lives; I wish to have my wife sealed and my children sealed to me;" in short, "I desire this and I wish that." What good would all this do you, if you do not live up to your profession and practise your religion? Not as much good as for me to take a bag of sand and baptize it, lay hands upon it for the gift of the Holy Ghost, wash it and anoint, and then seal it up to eternal lives, for the sand will be saved, having filled the measure of its creation, but you will not, except through faith and obedience.¹⁰³

Eighteen months later, Kimball further explained, "Now you say I believe in the principle of election. I do; I believe . . . if [the elected] . . . be faithful to the end of their days, they will be saved — every one of them. That is as far as I believe in election."¹⁰⁴ Brigham Young echoed this idea: "There are few who live for the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob after they are sealed upon them. No blessing that is sealed upon us will do us any good, unless we live for it."¹⁰⁵ This pragmatic emphasis on salvation through works was also preached by George Q. Cannon:

When he [Brigham Young] sealed a man up to eternal life, he bestowed upon him the blessings pertaining to eternity, and to the Godhead, or when he delegated others to do it in his stead, God in the eternal world recorded the act; the blessings that were sealed upon that man or that woman, they were sealed to be binding in this life, and in that life which is to come; they became part of the records of eternity, and would be fulfilled to the very letter upon the heads of those upon whom they were pro-

¹⁰² 17 Nov. 1867, *JD*, 12:103. Also of interest are Heber C. Kimball's 2 April 1854 remarks: "What you have agreed to do, God will require you to perform, if it should be ten thousand years after this time. And when the servants of God speak to you, and require you to do a thing, the Lord God will fulfil His words, and make you fulfil His words he gave to you through His servants. Inasmuch as you have come into this Church, and made a covenant to forsake the world, and cleave unto the Lord, and keep His commandments, the Lord will compel you to do it, if it should be in ten thousand years from this time. These are my views, and I know it will be so." *JD*, 2:151.

¹⁰³ Kimball, 6 Oct. 1855, *JD*, 3:124.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 19 April 1857, *JD*, 4:363–64. See also his comments on 6 April 1857, *JD*, 5:18–19.

¹⁰⁵ Brigham Young, 26 June 1865, *JD*, 11:117.

nounced, provided they were faithful before God, and fulfilled their part of the covenant.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, the conditional nature of the second anointing has become even more pronounced within the last two generations, due to an apparent reinterpretation of the "Holy Spirit of promise." "Elijah's seal" is not seen as Joseph Smith saw it — as making one's "calling and election sure" — but is now explained as the Holy Ghost. In the writings of twentieth-century Church authorities,¹⁰⁷ the Holy Spirit of promise, or Holy Ghost, has now become a "divine censor" which both seals *and unseals* ordinances according to an ever-changing judgment of an individual's worthiness. Given this viewpoint, it is unclear when the Doctrine and Covenants 132:26 punishments of "destruction in the flesh" and "buffetings of Satan" would be applied for sins other than the unpardonable one. A strict interpretation would hold for immediate punishment after someone who received the second anointing and Holy Spirit of Promise sealing committed "any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies." If the second anointing is "unsealed" however, it seems that these persons would no longer be subject to these prescribed penalties. Moreover, by ascribing a conditional stance to the second anointing, it would be difficult to perceive it as significantly different from the promissory anointing received in the regular endowment.

V

It is not customary now for presidents of Stakes, as you know, to recommend people for higher blessings.

Heber J. Grant, 1927

(Heber J. Grant to Levi S. Udall, 6 April 1927)

At the turn of the century the Church had 264,000 members and about fifty stakes; by 1920 there were 508,000 members; in 1928 the one-hundredth stake was organized.¹⁰⁸ By the time Heber J. Grant became president late in 1918, over 14,000 second anointings had been performed for both living and deceased members.¹⁰⁹ In the midst of this growth, President Grant issued a

¹⁰⁶ George Q. Cannon, 12 Aug. 1883, *JD*, 24:274. See also Charles W. Penrose, 2 Jan. 1881, *JD*, 21:356.

¹⁰⁷ See Joseph Fielding Smith's opinion on this question in *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:55, and 2:94–99. Bruce R. McConkie echoes this idea in *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 362. McConkie's "The Seven Deadly Heresies," a fireside address at Brigham Young University, 1 June 1980, should also be understood in light of this question. *BYU Devotional Speeches of the Year, 1980* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1981): 74–80, esp. p. 77.

¹⁰⁸ James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, *Mormonism in the Twentieth Century*, rev. ed. (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1969), pp. 51, 54.

¹⁰⁹ This figure is based on the Salt Lake Temple Ordinance Book, LDS Church Archives, as well as J. D. T. McAllister's "Totals To year ending Dec. 31, 1898" for the Saint George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake temples, LDS Church Archives. McAllister was, at the time, the president of the Manti Temple.

policy change which has affected the frequency of second-anointing administrations to this day.

The records which indicate the precise date of this policy change are not presently available to historians, but on 30 January 1926, President Grant wrote: "Second Blessings are only given by the President of the Church upon recommendation of a member of the Council of the Twelve." Evidently in response to a stake president's inquiry, the president continued: "At some time when one of the Apostles is in your Stake, if he feels to properly recommend Brother . . . the matter will [be] taken under advisement."¹¹⁰

This implied decision to discontinue receiving recommendations from stake presidents for second anointing candidates was reiterated by President Grant on 6 April 1927: "It is not customary now for presidents of Stakes, as you know, to recommend people for higher blessings. That matter should be taken up by the visiting apostle at your quarterly conference, and all recommendations of this kind should come direct from the apostles."¹¹¹

This policy change dramatically curtailed second anointings among members. According to a George F. Richards letter written in 1949 during his tenure as president of the Council of the Twelve, the policy was a direct result of an incident occurring "about 1928." A "brother who had received his Second Blessings, while speaking in a priesthood meeting in one of the Idaho stakes, told the brethren that they all should have their Second Blessings. Of course that was a serious infraction of the charge which he received when he had his Second Anointings; but I have never learned of any serious consequences to follow, except the action on the part of the Authorities, discontinuing the administration of these blessings in the Church."¹¹²

While figures are not available for each president, averages proportioned to their dates in office would indicate that Wilford Woodruff authorized nearly 2,000 or an average of just over 300 each year the Salt Lake Temple operated during his administration. Lorenzo Snow apparently also authorized about 2,000 second anointings, roughly twice as many per year as had Woodruff. Joseph F. Smith apparently authorized about 4,000 anointings, or less than half as many per year as his predecessor. And Heber J. Grant apparently authorized only a few hundred for an annual average only one-tenth that of his predecessor. In the Salt Lake Temple the frequency of second anointings peaked at the turn of the century during President Snow's short administration and fell sharply in 1922 to a mere trickle by 1928. After 1928, the average was less than two per year for at least the next decade and a half. Data after

¹¹⁰ Heber J. Grant to S. L. Chipman, 30 Jan. 1926, Heber J. Grant Letter Books, Confidential Research Files.

¹¹¹ Heber J. Grant to Levi S. Udall, 6 April 1927, First Presidency Letterpress Copybooks, LDS Church Archives.

¹¹² George F. Richards to the Members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, typescript copy, no date (but based on Richards 18 Aug. 1949 journal entry, this letter was delivered on the same date), original in George F. Richards Collection, LDS Church Archives.

1941 are not presently available to historians. By 1941, a total of 6,000 second anointings for the living and over 2,000 for the dead had been administered in the Salt Lake Temple during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Three-fourths of the total were for the living; and three-fifths of the total were for women. Counting all temples, just under 15,000 second anointings had been performed for the living by 1941, and just over 6,000 for the dead.¹¹³

During this period of declining administrations of higher blessings, George F. Richards singlehandedly labored to revive this practice. An apostle from 1906 to 1950, he was also president of the Salt Lake Temple from 1921 to 1937 and chaired a special apostolic committee which made extensive procedural changes in the endowment ceremony.¹¹⁴ In a 1934 letter to President Grant, he listed five General Authorities who had not received second anointings and wrote, "I understand that it is in order for a member of the Council of the Twelve to recommend worthy members to the President of the Church to receive their Second blessings. Accordingly, I recommend that these brethren and their wives be invited to receive their blessings."¹¹⁵ At least one of these candidates was not approved until December 1942 when he recorded in his journal, "I have anxiously looked forward to this action. The records show that there have been 32,495 such blessings administered in the Church and that during the last 12 years there have been but 8 administrations. Thirteen of the 32 General Authorities have not had theirs and at least two others who have had them with their first wives have later wives not yet anointed to their husbands."¹¹⁶ A few days later he wrote in another journal entry: "This has been a wonderful year for me and my family . . . I have been instrumental in renewing the former practice in the Church of administering Second Anointings

¹¹³ See note 109 and statistical reports in *Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District* 14 (April 1938): 10–11, and 15 (April 1939): 10–11. These statistics were published under the direction of Franklin T. Pomeroy. Interestingly the same type of statistics were included in George F. Richards's letter (cited n. 112); however, his totals are significantly different from those cited in the text. Richards claimed that just over 22,000 second anointings had been performed for the living by the end of 1942, with over 10,000 for the dead. His statistics for second anointings in the Nauvoo Temple are almost 150 short of the number recorded in the Book of Anointings, and his Salt Lake Temple statistics were dramatically inflated above those officially recorded in the Salt Lake Temple Ordinance Book.

It should also be noted that although a great number of vicarious second anointings were performed, Church officials seemed somewhat reluctant to permit a wholesale rash of these ordinances for the dead. President Lorenzo Snow was quoted as saying, "Many faithful people have gone into the spirit world without those blessings [i.e., the second anointing], and they will lose nothing by it," and that he preferred "to refer [them] to the future than to undertake to endorse recommends for persons who cannot be regularly recommended." George F. Gibbs to D. H. Cannon, 22 Dec. 1900. On 19 Oct. 1926, Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley wrote Joseph W. McMurrin, saying it "has been some years since ordinances bestowing second blessings [i.e., second anointings] have been performed in cases where both parties are dead," Confidential Research Files.

¹¹⁴ George F. Richards, Journal, 7, 8, 12 April 1921; 10, 27, 28 Dec. 1921; 3, 7 June 1922; 30, 31 August 1922; 14, 16, 17, 19, 20 April 1923; 12 July 1924; 9, 16 Dec. 1926; 25, 27 Jan. 1927 for a description of this committee's activities; LDS Church Archives.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19 April 1934.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 Dec. 1942.

to faithful members, the practice having gone practically into disuse I am sure that the Lord has inspired what I have been able to do along these lines.”¹¹⁷

Judging from his remarks seven years later, however, in a 1949 letter presented to the Council of the First Presidency and the Twelve, Richards still expressed frustration: “For a long time I have felt that I would like to express to you the disappointment I feel in that we have practically discontinued the administration of Second Anointings in the Church I have not been able to bring myself to feel that the Lord is pleased with us in neglecting such an important and sacred endowment Thousands of good and faithful men and women are dying without receiving a fulfillment of the promise made them in connection with the temple ceremonies.” After citing various statistics and the Idaho incident discussed above, Richards concluded:

It appears to me that the mistake made by the good brother in Idaho was not so serious as to justify letting those sacred ordinances come into disuse in the Church. I think now is the time to act; with such modifications as to details as the brethren might feel to make, insuring that these blessings be administered only to those who are worthy to receive them. . . .

If there is condemnation resting upon us for our neglect, the longer we delay action the greater will be our condemnation. . . .

Temples under construction now and in the future should be provided with a room for the administration of these blessings alone, to be known as the Holy of Holies, for if we do not move in the matter before us, some others coming after us will do so for it must be done, and temples should be designed and constructed with that thought in mind.

It is to be hoped that this communication will not be shelved and forgotten without full consideration by this Council. For several years these matters have given me great mental anxiety and spiritual concern, and but for want of courage I would have sought an opportunity to be heard years ago. I do not want to leave this sphere of action without vigorously protesting our indifference and neglect.¹¹⁸

While the results of this exchange are not presently available, Richards did note in his journal that day: “The paper and other statements made by me in connection therewith were accepted 100%.”¹¹⁹

Aside from a few letters and other fragmentary bits of information, very little is known of recent LDS practice regarding second anointings. One person recalled that when he was a small boy in a rural Utah town early this century, “second endowments [i.e., second anointings] *were spoken of* rather frequently.”¹²⁰ Today, however, members typically do not understand such references or know of the ordinance. Nonetheless, occasional instances of

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 31 Dec. 1942.

¹¹⁸ Letter cited n. 112.

¹¹⁹ Richards, Journal, 18 Aug. 1949.

¹²⁰ Asael Carlyle Lambert, from holograph notes titled “Second Endowments,” which recount an interview with Howard S. McDonald, located in A. C. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Division, Marriott Library, University of Utah; emphasis in original.

present-day anointings have occurred.¹²¹ Vicarious second anointings are also performed, but are less frequent. Formerly the Church president delegated authority to perform second anointings to General Authorities and temple presidents; today it is understood that if the Church president does not perform the ceremony, he ordinarily must be present in the room while it is done by a designated individual, although his presence has not always been possible. The policy of the Church president calling up candidates to receive the second anointing still continues. In the past the ordinance typically was held in a special room called the Holy of Holies, a room with which only a few temples are equipped. At present, any room in a temple specifically set apart for the purpose will suffice.¹²²

However, a more perplexing doctrinal question remains, without a clear answer presently available: In Mormon theology, must a faithful member receive the second anointing for exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom? The record of former LDS practices, both for the living and the dead, seems to say yes. Yet the current official policy initiated by Heber J. Grant suggests that Church authorities now feel that the second anointing is not required for exaltation.¹²³ However, the fact that the ordinance continues to be performed — albeit on a small scale — seems to signal some importance. While its current limitations may have partially stemmed from anxiety of the hierarchy to prevent this ritual from being conferred upon people who might later fall from faithfulness, it is more likely that the Church's current posture resulted from the second anointing becoming a conditional ordinance rather than an "unconditional" one. As a conditional ordinance, it becomes a "special blessing" for a limited number of proven, trustworthy older men and women or for the upper levels of a highly exclusivist and insular hierarchy. In such a light, much of the significance of the ordinance is reduced.¹²⁴

¹²¹ For example, see Carrel H. Sheldon's letter in *DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT* 14 (Winter 1981): 15 where she tells of knowing one couple who received the second anointing during David O. McKay's administration and two couples during Spencer W. Kimball's administration.

¹²² This procedural information was related to me by Provo Temple President Orville Gunther in March 1978 and was reiterated by Oakland Temple President Richard B. Sonne in a personal interview on 14 Nov. 1981, and by Idaho Falls Temple President Devier Harris on 29 Dec. 1982. A picture of the Holy of Holies in the Salt Lake Temple was published in James E. Talmage's original edition of *House of the Lord*; more recent "reprints" have removed the picture. The same picture was reprinted in *Improvement Era* 39 (Nov. 1936): 241.

¹²³ When John A. Tvedtnes, for instance, asked Apostle Harold B. Lee in a Salt Lake Temple missionary question-and-answer session, if the "second endowment" existed and, "if so, what connection does it have with the Holy Spirit of Promise, and who receives it and why and how?", Lee answered, "You don't have to worry. You've received all the ordinances necessary for exaltation. . . . It is a special blessing given by the President of the Church to men who have been called. It is not necessary to receive it, however. You have all the endowment you need to be exalted." John A. Tvedtnes, *Journal*, 30 June 1961; recounted by permission.

¹²⁴ In an interview with one temple president, I was told the second anointing was merely a "special blessing" and is not essential to exaltation. He said he was not sure why people

The early Mormons who received the second anointing recorded the event in their diaries with great joy. Abraham O. Smoot wrote that it “was a day of great enjoyment for me, it gave birth to the greatest blessings and an higher exaltation in the Priesthood than ever had been anticipated by me.”¹²⁵ John D. Lee, called by Brigham Young to keep records of the anointings, wrote in his diary: “We received our anointings yea, Holy anointings in the Temple of the Lord — under the hands of Elder Orson Hyde this certainly produced more joy comfort and pleasure & reconciliation of feeling — than could possibly have been imagined.”¹²⁶ For them, the event clearly had theological significance as well. Theoretically the blessing of the fulness of the priesthood is still attainable. As Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve has noted,

Holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood have power to press forward in righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, magnifying their callings, going from grace to grace, until through the fulness of the ordinances of the temple they receive the fulness of the priesthood and are ordained kings and priests. Those so attaining shall have exaltation and be kings, priests, rulers, and lords in their respective spheres in the eternal kingdoms of the great King who is God our Father.¹²⁷

Whether, as Joseph Fielding Smith asserted, “There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God without the fulness of the priesthood,”¹²⁸ remains to be seen.

were called to receive second anointings and for that reason had “put the subject out of his mind.” It is noteworthy that during his remarks preceding a temple wedding ceremony I attended, he defined “fulness of the priesthood” as having received the Melchizedek Priesthood, the endowment, and the marriage sealing for eternity. “By receiving the temple marriage sealing,” he stated, “you will receive the ‘fulness of the priesthood’ in the sense that it is the final ordinance for exaltation.” In talking with him later, I mentioned it was my understanding the phrase “fulness of the priesthood” referred to the second anointing. He disagreed and reaffirmed what he stated before the wedding. I asked him if he had received precise instruction from higher sources regarding his statement on “fulness of the priesthood.” He replied he had not; that “I researched it out on my own, and if you read Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie, they say the same thing.” Another interview with a different temple president drew similar comments. This president, however, not only described the second anointing as a “special blessing” but stated: “The second anointing doesn’t do anything more for you than the first anointing and endowment; no special ordination is performed in the second anointing.” If this information is correct, it seems likely that the ceremony’s structure has been altered in recent years to reflect Church leaders’ concerns about ordaining members to godhood as was done in former years. This would help explain present-day Church leaders’ uniform, widespread use of the descriptive term “special blessing” when referring to the second anointing.

¹²⁵ Abraham O. Smoot, Journal, typescript entry for 17 Jan. 1846, p. 246, original in Lee Library.

¹²⁶ John D. Lee, Diary, typescript entry for 17 Jan. 1846, original in LDS Church Archives.

¹²⁷ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 425.

¹²⁸ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:132.