

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE RESTORATION OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

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“Herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified” (D&C 132:63).

When God placed Adam and Eve upon the earth, He established a system of family government patterned after celestial government—the patriarchal order, or, as it is called in the Doctrine and Covenants, “the new and everlasting covenant of marriage” (D&C 131:2). We lived under this priesthood order in our premortal existence.¹ This type of government is a perfect system of organization; however, as apostasy occurred on the earth, men neglected and counterfeited the patriarchal order of God. When Joseph Smith restored the gospel to the earth, he reestablished the patriarchal order and a correct understanding of what God intended the new and everlasting covenant of marriage to be.

Speaking of this new and everlasting covenant of marriage, President Ezra Taft Benson explained that this “order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order because it came down from father to son. . . . But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God—just as Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality.”² In the

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patriarchal order, power resides with God the Eternal Father, who shares—through covenants—that power with men and women upon conditions of righteousness so that they can assist in His work upon the earth. And what is His work? “To bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

“I HAVE ENDOWED HIM WITH THE KEYS OF THE POWER OF THIS PRIESTHOOD” (D&C 132:59).

Since the patriarchal order is an order of the priesthood, a definition of priesthood is important before we proceed. Elder Bruce R. McConkie defined priesthood thus: “As pertaining to eternity, priesthood is the eternal power and authority of Deity by which all things exist.”³ Joseph Smith explained priesthood by saying that it is “a perfect law of theocracy, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam.”⁴ The prophet further explained that the Melchizedek Priesthood “is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven.”⁵

The problem in understanding priesthood is that our finite minds have trouble comprehending anything so encompassing, so magnificent. Usually when speaking of priesthood we make reference to only parts of the priesthood. As Joseph Smith explained, the priesthood has “parts, ramifications, powers and blessings belonging to the same,” and “all Priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it.”⁶ Elder John A. Widtsoe explained that “motherhood is an eternal part of Priesthood.”⁷ Another part of priesthood consists of the offices to which men are ordained. Often, when we speak of priesthood within a cultural context, it is these offices of the priesthood to which we refer. But it should always be remembered that priesthood is much more than the offices that belong to it. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained, “The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. No office adds any power, dignity, or authority to the priesthood. All offices derive their rights, prerogatives, graces, and powers from the priesthood.”⁸

The priesthood of God, then, is the power of God. This is the power by which the immortality and eternal life of man will be brought about. By sharing this power, thereby empowering His children, God desires to make us like He is. One of the major efforts of

His work includes organizing worlds and peoples and preparing places for them to eternally abide in His power. As the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, “If you will that I *give unto you a place* in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you” (D&C 78:7; emphasis added). Shortly before performing the Atonement, which enables this priesthood power in our lives, Jesus comforted the people by saying, “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. *I go to prepare a place* for you. And when I go, I will prepare a place for you, and come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also” (Joseph Smith Translation, John 14:2–3; emphasis added). Preparing a place is an act of organization and implies that in the eternal scheme of things everyone has a place or that there is a proper order in which we should and will abide.

“MY HOUSE IS A HOUSE OF ORDER, SAITH THE LORD GOD” (D&C 132:18).

One of the major functions of the priesthood is to bring about this order—to organize mankind into the proper eternal arrangement. As Joseph Smith said, “The spirits of men are eternal . . . they are organized according to that Priesthood which is everlasting, ‘without beginning of days or end of years.’”⁹ Many of the words we use in conjunction with priesthood illustrate this concept. The correct name of the Melchizedek Priesthood itself includes the word *order*. As Joseph Smith explained, before being called Melchizedek, the priesthood “was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God*. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood” (D&C 107:3–4). In the Book of Mormon, this priesthood is referred to as “the order of his Son” (Alma 13:2), or “the holy order of God” (Alma 4:20), or simply the “holy order” (2 Nephi 6:2).

An *order* is a group of people united or organized in a formal way.¹⁰ In addition to being part of its title, the concept of organization is further emphasized by the fact that a man receives the priesthood by being ordained to it. *Ordain* comes from the Latin root *ordinare*, which means to put in order. Once ordained with priesthood

power, a man has the authority to officiate in *ordinances*. This English word originates from the same Latin root, *ordinare*, as did *ordain*, but also comes to us through the Middle French *ordenance*, which means an act of arranging.¹¹ Thus we see that the very titles and vocabulary of the priesthood help us understand the significance of order within the gospel and allow us to define priesthood government on earth as a system by which every righteous individual is united within the proper order—the family order—and empowered to function and progress within the plan of salvation.

“ALL WHO WILL HAVE A BLESSING AT MY HANDS SHALL ABIDE THE LAW WHICH WAS APPOINTED FOR THAT BLESSING” (D&C 132:5).

Once we understand the importance of priesthood order, we are in a position to begin to understand the patriarchal order, or the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, because in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, marriage is part of the priesthood—an actual order within the priesthood (see D&C 131:2). That is why a man and a woman must declare themselves worthy to be eligible to enter the patriarchal order. It is a holy priesthood order, and only those committed to obey God are eligible to receive this power. In addition to being worthy, the man and the woman must have received the prerequisite ordinances intended to prepare them for this order. A man must also have been ordained to an office within the Melchizedek Priesthood. In other words, he must have “taken his place” or have “been arranged” within the offices of the priesthood. When a man and woman are married in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, they are *sealed* together and in the eyes of God are considered “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24), or one unit—a family unit. As one unit, they now take their place within the patriarchal order of the priesthood—the man and woman together. This does not mean that the woman holds priesthood office with the man. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie explains, “Women do not have the priesthood conferred upon them and are not ordained to offices therein, but they are entitled to all priesthood blessings. Those women who go on to their exaltation, ruling and reigning with husbands who are kings and priests, will themselves be *queens* and *priestesses*. They will hold positions of power, authority, and preferment in eternity.”¹²

When entering the patriarchal order, a man and a woman do not covenant with each other. Instead, each of them covenants with God—the Eternal Patriarch.¹³ Therefore, marriage in the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a dyad but a triad with God as the head, and it establishes a partnership with God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. It is also interesting to note that the patriarchal order is entered into at an altar. Under the law of Moses, an altar is the place of sacrifice.¹⁴ It is also the designated place for God’s children to make covenants with Him. As such, the altar represents Jesus Christ and His great Atonement. In the temple sealing ceremony, the man and the woman kneel, the altar between them, to sacrifice their aloneness, their selfishness, their separateness. At that altar they make their covenants with God and are given the authority to perform the sacred rites that pertain to marriage that will make them one with each other—one flesh. As they remain worthy, they also become one with God. As one with Him, they do God’s work upon the earth. Together, then, they continue (upon conditions of worthiness) as part of this priesthood order known as the patriarchal order, which is preparatory to and prerequisite for them to enter the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, where, if they are faithful, they will eventually inherit all that God has.

It is important to note here that *all* worthy people will have the opportunity to at some point enter this order. This is a promise from a God, who cannot lie (see Ether 3:12). Although not everyone has this opportunity in mortality, every worthy person will eventually be given the opportunity to enter the patriarchal order. Therefore, it is imperative that all of God’s children understand the patriarchal order and how it operates in the eternal scheme of their lives.

“THIS IS ETERNAL LIVES—TO KNOW THE ONLY WISE AND TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM HE HATH SENT” (D&C 132:24).

The goal of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to establish God’s order and bring as many people who have a desire to a knowledge of and unity with God, a unity that is possible only through the power of the priesthood. Because of the Fall, mortal beings were cut off from the presence of God. The priesthood provides the ordinances that, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, allow us to reunite with God

or to be brought into “at-one-ment” with Him. This uniting process can be considered a healing process whereby we are made whole or healed from the effects of the Fall and from the effects of our own sins. It is also a progression, and becoming one flesh with another human being is a necessary step in this process of being made whole. The absolute intimacy and selfless sharing of life that is intended as part of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage is not only made possible by priesthood power but can also only be achieved through priesthood power.

As Lehi explained to his son Jacob, “I know that thou art redeemed, *because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer*; for thou hast beheld that in the fulness of time he cometh to bring salvation unto men” (2 Nephi 2:3; emphasis added). Neither Jacob nor you nor I will be saved solely because of our own efforts, our own righteous acts. We are saved because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Neither are our natures and hearts changed because of our self-discipline or knowledge of psychological techniques. They are changed through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 4:3, 11; Moses 6:59–60). Likewise, our marriage relationships are not made strong and eternal because we are good at loving each other or meeting one another’s needs. They are made eternal because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Too often we speak of the difference between a temple marriage and a civil marriage as simply a matter of duration. More important, however, they differ in the amount of divine power available to enhance the quality of the relationship. When worthily entered, the new and everlasting covenant of marriage means that priesthood power can operate in the relationship, making the union celestial now—not just in the next life. By that I mean it has the potential of possessing qualities that characterize celestial existence, such as extreme happiness and joy.

At a Brigham Young University Education Week lecture many years ago, Chauncey Riddle said something I have never forgotten: “Right now the Church is known for its large families. It will become a light to the world . . . only when it becomes known for its good marriages.”¹⁵ The first step to achieving a celestial marriage is to understand the power available and then to use it. Perhaps this is part of what Joseph Smith had in mind when he said that the devil “will so transform things as to make one gape at those who are doing

the will of God.”¹⁶ Obviously evil is becoming more pronounced. But I think that in the latter days, righteousness is also becoming more pronounced. Thus the gap is widening, causing people to “gape” at those who are striving after righteousness. For us to do the will of God, we must study and understand this amazing gift of priesthood that Joseph Smith restored to the earth, be worthy to use it, and invoke its powers in our daily lives and in our family relationships.

**“I . . . WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE LAW OF MY HOLY
PRIESTHOOD, AS WAS ORDAINED BY ME AND MY FATHER
BEFORE THE WORLD WAS” (D&C 132:28).**

In order to participate in this patriarchal order and to help men and women progress within it, each of us has duties to perform. Men are to preside in the home in the physical stead of God, in the same way that Christ presides over the Church (see 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:21–33). Men are also to administer the life-giving ordinances of the priesthood to their family and to others as called upon to do so. Women are to give life. They are also to assist in the work of the priesthood—to help bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of God’s children. What becomes clear as one ponders this is that neither of them can do what they need to do alone. Neither man nor woman is complete without the other, and alone neither can fully help in bringing about the work and glory of God. To participate fully in His work, both men and women must be united in the Lord. This relationship was clearly defined in the Garden of Eden before the Fall.

In the beginning God declared, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). The adjective *meet* is seldom used in English anymore, but Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines it as “fit; suitable; proper; qualified.”¹⁷ The Hebrew word translated as “help” in this verse is *ezer*, which is used twenty-one times in the Old Testament. Of those twenty-one occurrences, sixteen refer to God. Two examples are “O God: thou art my help and my deliverer” (Psalm 70:5), and “our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield” (Psalm 33:20). Some have thought the word “help” indicates that women are subordinate to men; but *subordinate* as a translation of the word *ezer* is a misuse of the word. There is no way man

can conceive of God as his subordinate. Instead, Adam was incomplete and needed Eve in order to be complete.¹⁸ President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that “neither the man nor the woman were capable of filling the measure of their creation alone. The union of the two was required to complete man in the image of God.”¹⁹ As a pair, then, man and woman are completed in the image of God (see Genesis 1:26–27; Moses 2:26–27) and are trusted and empowered to do the work of God. According to Genesis, the woman is the qualified and necessary help needed to accomplish the work of the priesthood.²⁰

The earliest revelation recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants that speaks of the importance of priesthood and its organizing and uniting power is section 2: “Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.” This revelation, delivered by Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, occurred during the night of September 21, 1823. Almost six years later, on May 15, 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and began the restoration of the offices of the priesthood when he ordained them to the Aaronic Priesthood (see D&C 13). Shortly after that Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood. But the 1823 revelation stated that the priesthood would be revealed by Elijah. It was not until thirteen years later, on April 3, 1836, that Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the newly finished Kirtland Temple. On that occasion, Jesus Christ first appeared to accept the temple (see D&C 110:7). Immediately afterward, Moses appeared to restore the “keys of the gathering of Israel” (110:11). Elias next appeared and “committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” (110:12), and finally Elijah appeared to bestow upon Joseph Smith the keys of the sealing powers (see 110:13–16). This was the culmination of priesthood power—the restoration of the power by which the family system of government that existed in heaven could operate on the earth and the power to seal these family units so they would be valid through all eternity.

In 1843 the revelations concerning the new and everlasting

covenant of marriage (D&C 131 and 132) were recorded, but as the heading to section 132 explains, “The doctrines and principles involved in this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831.” A few of the early Church leaders and their wives had received the temple ordinances beginning in May of 1842.²¹ But for the body of the Church to receive these blessings, there needed to be a temple. In 1842, Joseph explained to the Relief Society that “the Church is not now organiz’d in its proper order, and cannot be until the Temple is completed.”²² Then again in 1843 Joseph said, “Go to and finish the [Nauvoo] temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood.”²³

It is difficult to describe in one or two sentences how this power of the priesthood empowers men and women in the patriarchal order. Part of the reason for the difficulty occurs because one cannot understand the new and everlasting covenant of marriage until one understands the gospel within which the Lord through Joseph Smith situated the patriarchal order. Paradoxically, it was during the time Joseph Smith experienced abuses of worldly power in Liberty Jail that the Lord revealed to him that the “rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness” (D&C 121:36). When we analyze how God uses priesthood power, we see that He doesn’t use it to dominate or coerce His children; instead, He allows them to be “agents unto themselves” (D&C 29:39). He uses power to edify, heal, encourage, teach, create, and bless. That is the only way priesthood power can be used. The powers of heaven are “controlled” and “handled” only by means of righteousness. This emphasis on righteousness helps us understand that the only thing priesthood power should be used to dominate is our own nature. As Joseph Smith said, “A man can do nothing for himself unless God direct him in the right way; and the priesthood is for that purpose.”²⁴

“FOR I HAVE CONFERRED UPON YOU THE KEYS AND POWER OF THE PRIESTHOOD, WHEREIN I RESTORE ALL THINGS, AND MAKE KNOWN UNTO YOU ALL THINGS IN DUE TIME” (D&C 132:45).

As part of the increase in knowledge that Joseph Smith promised, he established the Relief Society, explaining that “the Church was

never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized”²⁵ and that “the society should move according to the ancient Priesthood.”²⁶ This statement has great meaning when understood within the gospel framework. The work of the ancient priesthood (as it is today) was to establish God’s kingdom on the earth, and the sisters were to be involved in that work. During the first year the Relief Society was organized, 1842, seventeen meetings were held, six of which the Prophet Joseph attended and spoke at. In the manuscript history of the Church dated April 28, 1842, Joseph wrote, “I . . . gave a lecture on the Priesthood shewing how the sisters would come in possession of the privileges, blessings, and gifts of the Priesthood . . . and that they might attain unto these blessings by a virtuous life and conversation and diligence in keeping all the commandments.”²⁷ This and other messages indicate how Joseph intended the sisters to help in the work of the priesthood and enlightens us as to what the work of the priesthood entails. More importantly, however, it provides a pattern that shows us how priesthood power can and should operate for both men and women within the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.

In the very first meeting of what would become known as the Relief Society, Joseph instructed the sisters that they were to “provoke the brethren to good works in looking to the wants of the poor . . . to assist by correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the community, and save the Elders the trouble of rebuking.”²⁸ Later, on April 28, 1842, he amended this by instructing as to how they were to provoke the brethren: “You must put down iniquity and by your good example provoke the Elders to good works.”²⁹ He also said, “Let the weight of innocence be felt which is more mighty than a millstone hung about the neck. Not war, not jangle, not contradiction, but meekness, love purity, these are the things that should magnify us.”³⁰ He encouraged them “to expound scriptures to all.”³¹ He told them that “there should be a select society, separate from all the evils of the world, choice, virtuous and holy.” He encouraged them to repent by saying, “All hearts must repent—be pure and God will regard them and bless them in a manner that could not be bless’d in any other way.”³² If this advice were heeded by all husbands and wives, divorce would never occur.

In addition to words encouraging righteousness, Joseph warned

them, “Do not injure the character of anyone,”³³ and he “commended them for their zeal but said some times their zeal was not according to knowledge. One principal object of the institution was to purge out iniquity.”³⁴ He added that an “aspiring disposition will be in this Society, and must be guarded against—that every person should stand and act in the place appointed, and thus sanctify the Society and get it pure.” He then promised them that “if you will be pure, nothing can hinder.”³⁵

At this sixth meeting of the newly organized Relief Society, Joseph also “read the Chap [1 Corinthians 12] and give instructions respecting the different offices, and the necessity of every individual acting in the sphere allotted him or her; and filling the several offices to which they were appointed.”³⁶ After this he said, “I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time.”³⁷ It was six days after this pronouncement that the endowment was administered to men and women for the first time in this dispensation.³⁸

The word *key* was often used by the Prophet Joseph Smith. In this instance, it refers to a means of unlocking revelation whereby “knowledge and intelligence shall flow.” It is this knowledge and intelligence that empowers men and women to become like Christ, and by becoming more like Christ they are in turn unified with each other. In other words, the magnificent “key” that was given was the key to the knowledge that allows the blessings and power of the priesthood to change us—to allow us to be born again. In this born-again state, we are pure and sanctified and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who guides and direct us in all things (see 2 Nephi 32:5)—including our marital and family relationships. Priesthood power that is obtained through the covenants and through righteous living binds relationships, enhances us spiritually, and makes us one with each other and with God. As Mormon explains, “In Christ there should come every good thing” (Moroni 7:22). Thus, turning to Christ allows priesthood power to operate in our lives, which not only ensures that our marital relationships will be eternal but allows celestial happiness to be part of our relationships here in mortality.

As we read the teachings of Joseph Smith, it becomes clear that he understood he was restoring a way of life that would help men and women overcome the carnal, sensual tendencies that keep us

from receiving the power God wants us to have. Wilford Woodruff records hearing the Prophet teach some “precious principles” to the people: “Ever keep in exercise the principles of mercy & be ready to forgive our brother on the first intimations of repentance & asking forgiveness. . . . Beware of pride & not seek to excel one above another but act for each others good & honorably make mention of each others name in our prayers before the Lord & before our fellow men, & not backbite & devour our brother.”³⁹ To the Relief Society the Prophet said, “It is by union of feeling we obtain pow’r with God.”⁴⁰ And to a council of high priests and elders he explained, “No man is capable of judging a matter, in council, unless his own heart is pure; and that we frequently are so filled with prejudice, or have a beam in our own eye, that we are not capable of passing right decisions.”⁴¹

“I WILL MAGNIFY MY NAME UPON ALL THOSE WHO RECEIVE AND ABIDE IN MY LAW” (D&C 132:64).

It is this righteous way of life that allows priesthood power to be part of our marital relationships. In its splendor, the patriarchal order, or new and everlasting covenant of marriage, is both a means by which we obtain this power from God and the laboratory in which we practice and become proficient in using it. For those who succeed in this endeavor, the patriarchal order also becomes the crowning blessing whereby the marital relationship in its most magnificent form is allowed to continue for all eternity.

Those who understand the power that can be theirs and who use it are greatly blessed. A friend told me that at one point in her marriage, she and her husband realized they no longer loved each other. “He was leaving on a business trip, and it occurred to me that I didn’t care if he ever came home,” she explained. “Before he left, I confronted him with my feelings and he told me he felt the same. We decided to think about it while he was gone. When he returned, I expected him to say that since we didn’t love each other any more we should divorce, but instead he told me that we needed to repent. I was surprised, but willing to try. We mapped out a course whereby we studied the scriptures more, determined to serve better in our Church callings, analyzed our lives to see where we needed to change actions and habits, held more honest and sincere fasts, and attended

the temple more often. I can't say how or when it happened, but just as inexplicably as our love had faded, it was back. Only it was better, richer, and more joyful than it had ever been before. Since that time, when we begin to grow apart, we know what to do. We repent, and our marriage just keeps getting better and better."

In his autobiography, Parley P. Pratt expressed his feelings after Joseph explained the new and everlasting covenant of marriage to him: "I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this groveling sphere and expand it as the ocean. I felt that God was heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion; a kind of ministering angel, given to me as a comfort, and a crown of glory for ever and ever. In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also."⁴² Obviously, Elder Pratt was seeing and understanding the patriarchal order of marriage from within the context of the whole gospel of Jesus Christ. That is the only way it can be properly understood.

Joseph Smith restored the gospel of Jesus Christ and with it the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, which is an order of the priesthood, or, in other words, an order of God's power. When entered into with this understanding, both parties know that they are taking their place in God's eternal order and by so doing are being called upon to live by a higher law. They also know that by abiding that higher law of righteousness they not only assist in the work and the glory of God, but they also allow God to be part of and empower their marriage relationship. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). With God in their midst, those living in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage will be blessed with enabling priesthood power. Such a union will not only be eternal; it will also be happy, rewarding, and strong enough to endure the adversity and challenges of mortality.

NOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 559.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, "What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple," *Ensign*, August 1985, 7.

3. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 594.
4. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 322.
5. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1950), 4:207.
6. Smith, *Teachings*, 167, 180.
7. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 308.
8. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 595.
9. Smith, *Teachings*, 208.
10. Order seems to be very important to the Lord. Much of the Mosaic law was characterized by order. The temple furniture was arranged in a specific order, and rituals were performed in exact ways, which were to be routinely followed in daily life. There is so much prescribed order that, while some say its only function was to keep society organized, it appears to be pointing to more important things—to remind the people of eternal order.
11. C. S. Lewis points out that certain elements of mortal life constantly surprise us. Says Lewis, “We are so little reconciled to time that we are even astonished at it” (*Reflections on the Psalms* [Orlando: Harcourt, 1958], 138). We are startled to see how through time someone has grown, or we are surprised at how fast or slow time goes by on differing occasions. If time were the only thing we had ever known, the passage of it shouldn’t surprise us. It would be like water to a fish—unnoticeable. In the same way, most mortals possess a longing for order that seems strange in a world of chaos. How could we long for something we never knew existed? Order is an eternal principle that feels like home and is part of what we knew in our premortal existence. Thus I consider the longing for order that most of us experience a form of homesickness.
12. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 594.
13. I am aware that some consider the marriage covenant to be a covenant between a man and a woman. However, Elder McConkie defines a covenant as “a binding and solemn compact, agreement, contract, or mutual promise between God and a single person or a group of chosen persons” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 166). In addition, our beginning definition of patriarchal order from President Benson states that the patriarchal order is “an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God” (see note 2). He said nothing about them covenanting with each other. In a private conversation on March 10, 2005, with Robert Matthews, past temple president of the Mount Timpanogos Temple, he told me that he had carefully studied the wording of

the marriage sealing ceremony and found no indication that any of the promises were made with anyone but God. In his book *Approaching Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 385, Hugh Nibley claims that Heber C. Kimball taught that “there are no covenants made between individuals in the church. All promises and agreements are between the individual and our Father in Heaven; all other parties, including the angels are present only as witnesses.” I have been unable to find Kimball’s original teaching on the subject, but it is consistent with the teachings concerning gospel covenants. By definition a covenant entails eternal promises that only God has the power to bestow.

14. Today altars are still places of sacrifice. Each Sunday we appear before the altar of the sacrament to renew our covenant to sacrifice our sins and to remember Jesus Christ.
15. Quoted in Sherrie Johnson, *Man, Woman, and Deity* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 5.
16. Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, comp. and ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 117.
17. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language* (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1987), s.v. “meet.” The current definition for the word *meet* is “necessary” or “precisely adapted to a particular situation, need, or circumstance” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “meet”).
18. Sherrie Mills Johnson, “It Is Not Good That the Man Should Be Alone,” in *Living a Covenant Marriage*, ed. Douglas E. Brinley and Daniel K. Judd (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 253–66.
19. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 2:70.
20. Johnson, *Man, Woman, and Deity*.
21. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:1–2.
22. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 115.
23. Smith, *Teachings*, 323; see also D&C 107:18, 20.
24. Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:363.
25. Sarah M. Kimball, “Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, September 1, 1883, 51.
26. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 110.
27. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 119.
28. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 104.
29. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 117.
30. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 117.
31. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 105.

32. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 115.
33. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 105.
34. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 110.
35. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 116–17.
36. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 115.
37. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 118.
38. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:1–2; see also Smith, *Teachings*, 137.
39. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 7.
40. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 123.
41. Smith, *Teachings*, 69.
42. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 298.