ance of the gulls was therefore not unusual. Some skeptics thus saw the 1848 activities of both crick-
et's and gulls as simply natural phenomena. On the other hand, many Latter-day Saints, with faith in a
God whose hand is in history and who often acts through “natural” events, believed that their crops
had been saved in part by God’s intervention.

Over time, the 1848 “cricket war,” now called “the
miracle of the gulls,” became a prominent part of
the Saints’ collective memory. In honor of this occa-
sion, the indigenous California gull became the
Utah state bird, and in 1913 the Seagull Monu-
ment on TEMPLE SQUARE was dedicated to com-
memorate the birds’ role in the 1848 crisis.

In the Salt Lake Valley, crickets, frost, and
lack of water played havoc on the harvest of 1848,
and crop losses were severe. But the losses would
have been much worse without the appearance of
the gulls, which was thus a significant factor in the
survival of Utah’s pioneer settlers.

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SEALING

[This entry consists of three articles:

Sealing Power
Temple Sealing
Cancellation of Sealing]

The first article, Sealing Power, explains the meaning of
sealing in the Church and the authority required to per-
form an ordinance so it will be considered sealed; what is
a temple sealing and how it is obtained is presented in
the second article, Temple Sealing; and the third artic-
le, Cancellation of Sealing, is a brief statement on who
may cancel a sealing.]

SEALING POWER

Signets and seals have been used from early antiq-
ity to certify AUTHORITY. The word “seal” ap-
ppears many times in the scriptures. Jesus Christ
was “sealed” by God the Father (John 6:27), and
Paul reminded ancient Saints that God had
anointed and sealed them (2 Cor. 1:21–22) and told
others they “were sealed with that holy Spirit of
promise, which is the earnest [assurance] of our
inheritance until the redemption” (Eph. 1:13–14).
John spoke of the servants of God being sealed in
their foreheads (Rev. 7:3). In the apocryphal Acts
of Thomas (verse 131), Thomas prayed that he and
his wife and daughter “may receive the seal” and
“become servants of the true God.” Even today
licenses, diplomas, legal documents, and the like
bear seals that officially attest to their authenticity.

For Latter-day Saints, the ultimate sealing power is the
priesthood power given to authorized
servants of the Lord to perform certain acts on
earth and have them recognized (sealed) or val-
dated in heaven. They believe it is this authority
the Lord Jesus Christ described when he said to
Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the king-
don of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind
on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever
thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”
(Matt. 16:19).

The President of the Church holds and exer-
cises the keys of sealing on earth. When a man is
ordained an APOSTLE and set apart as a member of
the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, sealing is
one of the powers bestowed upon him. Other
GENERAL AUTHORITIES of the Church, the presi-
dencies of temples, and a limited number of offi-
cinators in each temple receive this sealing power
during their tenure. After one is approved by the
FIRST PRESIDENCY to receive the sealing power,
the President of the Church, one of his counselors,
or a member of the Twelve Apostles specifically
designated by the President confers the sealing
power upon him by the laying on of hands.
This is the specific authority to perform the temple
sealing ORDINANCES.

This is the authority by which “all covenants,
contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, perfor-
mances, connections, associations, or expecta-
tions” can be “made and entered into and sealed
by the Holy Spirit of promise” and receive “effic-
cy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection
of the dead” (D&C 132:7).

In this dispensation of the fullness of
times, the sealing power was restored by ELIJAH,
the last prophet of the Old Testament period to hold it (TPJS, pp. 339–40). He bestowed that
authority on Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY in
the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 (D&C 110).
As each man who has been President of the
Church was ordained an apostle and became a
member of the Quorum of the Twelve, he had the
sealing power bestowed upon him, and thus it has been transmitted to the present (D&C 110:13–16; 128:11).

What might be called the general sealing power is also vested in the President of the Church. Everyone who receives the PRIESTHOOD obtains this general sealing power to a degree. For example, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “All things that are not sealed by this power have an end when men are dead. Unless a baptism has this enduring seal, it will not admit a person to the celestial kingdom. . . . All things gain enduring force and validity because of the sealing power” (MD, pp. 615–616).

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TEMPLE SEALINGS

A “sealing,” as a generic term, means the securing, determining, or establishment of a bond of legitimacy. Among members of the Church sealing refers to the marriage of a husband and wife and to the joining together of children and parents in relationships that are to endure forever. This special type of sealing of husband and wife in marriage is referred to as “eternal marriage” or “celestial marriage.” It contrasts with civil and church marriages, which are ceremonies recognized only by earthly authority and are only for the duration of mortal life.

The sealing together of husband, wife, and children in eternal family units is the culminating ORDINANCE of the PRIESTHOOD, to which all others are preparatory. It must be performed by one holding the SEALING POWER and today in an LDS TEMPLE dedicated to God. The Savior referred to this sealing power when he gave his apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, saying that “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven” (Matt. 16:19). In modern times this sealing authority was restored to the earth in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, by the prophet ELIJAH, who was the ancient custodian of this power (D&C 110:13–16).

Both ancient and modern prophets have observed that if families are not sealed together in eternal units—if the hearts of the children and the fathers are not turned to each other (as alluded to in Malachi 4:5–6)—then the ultimate work and glory of God are not attained and the highest purposes of the creation of the earth are not achieved. “For we without them [ancestors or progenitors] cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect” (D&C 128:16–18).

To Latter-day Saints, the SPIRIT WORLD is as real as this world. By divine mandate, temple sealings are not only available to living persons, but are extended also to the deceased progenitors of a family through proxy ordinances performed in the temples. This process is known as SALVATION OF THE DEAD. Children born to parents who have been sealed in the temple are BORN IN THE COVENANT and thus are bonded to their parents for eternity without a separate ordinance of sealing.

To receive temple sealing ordinances, Church members must receive a TEMPLE RECOMMEND from a proper Church authority attesting that they are living prescribed Church standards. They then visit a temple and receive initiatory ordinances and the blessing referred to as the temple ENDOWMENT. This entails the receipt of instruction and being put under COVENANT to obey eternal laws set forth by God, which, as observed, will ensure a superior standard of morality, marriage, and family life. The sealing ordinances can then be administered, the full benefit of which can be secured only by continued obedience to the divine laws set forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A sealing ceremony is an inspiring and solemn ordinance performed in specially designated and dedicated rooms of a temple. The couple to be married or the family to be sealed kneel at an altar. The officiator is one who has received the sealing power under the highest priesthood authority in the Church (see PROPHET, SEER, AND REVELATOR; SEALING POWER).

For members of the Church, sealings endow life with greater purpose and give marriage a sense of divine partnership with spiritual safeguards. Bringing children into the world becomes a divinely inspired stewardship. Sealings can sustain a family in life and console them in death. They establish continuity in life, here and hereafter.

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SECOND ESTATE

“Second estate” is a Latter-day Saint term that refers to mankind’s mortal existence on this earth. In scripture it occurs only in the writings of ABRAHAM (Abr. 3:26), but the preearth life of spirits is called “their first estate” in Jude 1:6. Latter-day Saints believe that through the process of birth, the spirit children of God who kept their first estate (premortal) enter into their second estate by receiving a physical body with additional opportunities for experience and development. Mortality is then a probationary period in which individuals “prepare to meet God” (Alma 12:24). In the final judgment all mankind will “be judged of their works . . . which were done by the temporal body in their days of probation” (1 Ne. 15:32; cf. Alma 12:14). All who receive the saving principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (including faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, ordination to the priesthood for men, endowment, and eternal marriage) and seek to live righteous and useful lives, embracing the fulness of the Gospel, will obtain the complete blessings of the atonement of Jesus Christ. All who had no opportunity to do so during earth life will have it in the postmortal spirit world (1 Pet. 3:18–19; 4:6; D&C 138:36–37). Every person who has lived on the earth will be resurrected with perfected corporeal bodies, and those who have kept the commands will enter into eternal life, and “have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever” (Abr. 3:26).

ALEXANDER L. BAUGH

SECRET COMBINATIONS

In latter-day scriptures, secret combinations are groups of conspirators who plot and initiate “works of darkness” for evil and selfish purposes. Secret combinations have existed since the days of Cain (Moses 5:51), Satan is their author (2 Ne. 26:22), power and gain are their motives (Ether 8:15, 25), and conspiracy is their method of operation (Hel. 6:22–24). Secret combinations may be brotherhoods, groups, societies, or governments. They operate in secrecy to perform evil acts for the purpose of gaining power over the minds and actions of people.