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“I Have Sinned Against Heaven, and Am Unworthy of Your Confidence, But I Cannot Live without a Reconciliation”: Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church

Lyndon W. Cook

The disaffection of Church leaders in high places has always been a topic of much interest and concern. Since motives for dissent are usually difficult to determine with certainty, the historian must search for feeling as well as fact in his pursuit of understanding the apostate. Thomas B. Marsh, the first President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, became an apostate in 1838 in the heat of the so-called Mormon War in northwestern Missouri. Unlike most dissenters, Thomas Marsh finally returned to the Church that he had so bitterly rejected. Both his private and public statements, after he rejoined the Church, turn out to be confessions of guilt and reveal his reasons for withdrawing in Missouri. While Marsh's experience was very personal, it nevertheless provides a poignant illustration to the larger Church membership of the dangers of being too critical of those in authority.

Thomas Baldwin Marsh, the son of James Marsh and Molly Law, was born 1 November 1799 in Acton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts.¹ Spending his early boyhood working on farms in New Hampshire and Vermont, Thomas ventured to New York City at the age of fourteen where he worked first as a hotel waiter and later as a groom for horses. After his marriage to Elizabeth Godkin in New York City on his twentieth birthday, Thomas worked there a short time without success as a grocer. He later found employment in a type foundry at Boston, where he continued until about 1830.

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¹Thomas B. Marsh may have been born in 1800, not 1799 (see *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* [January 1936], p. 28).

In an autobiographical account Thomas Marsh remembered traveling from Boston to western New York State in the summer of 1829 with Benjamin Hall. The only purpose given for the journey was that he was led by the Spirit.² At Lyons, New York, near Palmyra, Thomas heard of the "golden bible" story and traveled to Palmyra to investigate the report. At Palmyra, he learned of the printing of the Book of Mormon and found Martin Harris in Egbert B. Grandin's printing office, where the work of printing was underway. After obtaining a printed sheet containing the first sixteen pages of the Book of Mormon, Thomas was directed by Martin Harris to the home of Joseph Smith, Sr., to see Oliver Cowdery.³ Oliver explained the message of the Restoration to Thomas, who returned to Massachusetts overjoyed with what he had learned. From Boston, on 25 October 1829, Thomas corresponded with Oliver Cowdery, requesting to be kept informed of the progress of the work.⁴

During the following months Thomas maintained contact by letter with Oliver and possibly others in Palmyra, and upon learning of the organization of the Church in April 1830, he made preparations to move his family to Palmyra, where he arrived by late August of that year. From Palmyra, Thomas quickly proceeded to Fayette and was baptized in Cayuga Lake by David Whitmer on 3 September 1830. Almost immediately after his baptism Thomas was ordained an elder, and a revelation received for him the same month (Doctrine and Covenants 31) named him a spiritual "physician unto the Church."⁵

Thomas B. Marsh moved to Kirtland with his family in the spring of 1831, where he was ordained a high priest,⁶ and soon thereafter he was commanded to go on a mission to Missouri. Returning to Ohio from western Missouri, Thomas made arrangements to settle permanently in Independence, Missouri, where he arrived in November 1832.

Thomas, who was universally known as "Brother Marsh," soon distinguished himself as a leader and suffered with others of the

²See "History of Thomas B. Marsh Written by Himself in Great Salt Lake City, November 1857," Library-Archives of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives.

³Joseph Smith, Jr., still residing in Harmony, Pennsylvania, had just left Palmyra a short time before Marsh's arrival.

⁴See Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, Manchester, New York, 6 November 1829, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives.

⁵See "History of Thomas B. Marsh."

⁶The high priests were the presiding elite of the priesthood from 1831-1834. Later as members of the church high councils, high priests exercised an exceptional amount of authority until well after the Prophet's death. About 1841, after their return from Great Britain, members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles began to assume a place next to the First Presidency in accordance with Joseph Smith's instructions and earlier revelations.

Missouri Saints when they were expelled from Jackson County in the fall of 1833. In the summer of 1834 he was selected to go to Kirtland to participate in ceremonial preparations for the "endowment,"⁷ witness the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, and attend the solemn assembly. He was appointed a member of the Clay County, Missouri, High Council on 7 July 1834.⁸

On 29 January 1835 Thomas joined with Edward Partridge en route for Kirtland where they arrived on 24 April. In his absence, Thomas had been chosen one of the original Quorum of Twelve Apostles by the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Thomas Marsh was ordained to this position 26 April 1835, two days after his arrival. At a meeting on 2 May 1835, the quorum was arranged according to age, and Thomas Marsh was designated president of the group since he was the eldest member.⁹

In the summer of 1835 Thomas joined with others of his quorum on a mission to the eastern states. After his return to Kirtland he helped in the completion of the Kirtland Temple and participated in sacred meetings prior to its dedication. On 22 January 1836 Thomas was given a special anointing as president of his quorum.¹⁰

Much excitement attended the meetings which preceded the temple dedication and solemn assembly since the Church leaders were anticipating an appearance of the Savior at the solemn assembly on 30 March 1836. On 23 January 1836, the day after Marsh's anointing, Oliver Cowdery recorded: "In the evening Elder Marsh called at my house: we talked much upon the subject of visions: he greatly desired to see the Lord. Brother Marsh is a good man, and I pray that his faith may be strengthen[ed] to behold the heavens open."¹¹

After the eventful days surrounding the Kirtland Temple dedication, Thomas returned to his place in Clay County, Missouri. During the summer of 1836 it became apparent to Church leaders in Clay County that the Saints would need to find another place of settlement. Since many of the Mormon families were in meager circumstances and numerous others were en route to Clay County, William W. Phelps and John Whitmer, the presiding Church leaders in Missouri, requested Thomas B. Marsh and Elisha H. Groves to travel to Kentucky and Tennessee to obtain funds either by donation

⁷The Kirtland "endowment" has reference to the spiritual outpouring which attended the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and the Kirtland solemn assembly. Washing and anointing ceremonies in Kirtland in early 1836 were intended to help prepare the brethren for the spiritual endowment.

⁸See Far West Record, 7 July 1834, Church Archives.

⁹Kirtland Council Minute Book, p. 187, Church Archives.

¹⁰See Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1931-1952), 2:382; hereafter cited as *HC*.

¹¹Oliver Cowdery Sketch Book, 23 January 1836, Church Archives.

or loan for "Poor Bleeding Zion."¹² They left Liberty, Missouri, in July 1836 and were successful in gathering \$1450 at 10 percent interest. On their return to Missouri in the fall of 1836, they found the Saints settling Far West, a new area north of Clay County. Here, at Far West, Thomas shouldered his responsibilities well, both in Church leadership and in establishing a new Mormon city.¹³

By early 1837, however, Brother Marsh became convinced that W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer were attempting to administer the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church independent of the high council or bishopric. Although his position of apostle at the time (1837) did not permit him to interfere with the Missouri presidency (W. W. Phelps and the Whitmers), Thomas, nevertheless, supported members of the local high council in their opposition to the actions of the presidency. Although this problem was temporarily resolved in early 1837, it surfaced again the following year and provided the setting for Thomas Marsh to exert an influence which resulted in a power struggle between the Missouri presidency and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve.¹⁴

In the spring of 1837, Thomas Marsh was experiencing frustration concerning his position as President of the Quorum of the Twelve. Although an 1835 revelation seemed to place his quorum next to the First Presidency in the church government (see D&C 107:22–23), in reality the presidency in Missouri and the two Church high councils had retained their supremacy (having been organized before the Twelve) next to the First Presidency. Furthermore, Thomas lamented that his quorum had not maintained close contact since their 1835 mission and that they had not been unified in fulfilling their divine calling as special missionaries. Even more serious to Thomas was the news that some members of his quorum had fallen into apostasy; he was likewise mortified to learn that Parley P. Pratt, also one of his quorum, was making preparations to proceed to England to preach the gospel.

Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten were first and second respectively in seniority among the Twelve, and both resided in Missouri. On 10 May 1837 they dispatched word to Parley requesting him to defer his mission across the Atlantic until the Quorum could convene. Thomas Marsh considered the taking of the gospel abroad an action of such magnitude that no member of the Quorum should

¹²Thomas B. Marsh to Wilford Woodruff, 30 April 1838, Church Archives.

¹³In addition to at least one city lot, Thomas Marsh purchased some 320 acres of property near Far West, Missouri.

¹⁴Record of this difficulty is found in Far West Record, April 1837; see also John Murdock Journal, under date, Church Archives.

attempt it independently.¹⁵ In the letter, he called a meeting of the entire Quorum of the Twelve for 24 July 1837 in Kirtland, and Thomas Marsh and David Patten left sometime the following month for Ohio.

In the meantime, however, Joseph Smith had directed Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde of the Twelve to travel to England to preach the gospel.¹⁶ It is not known when Apostles Marsh and Patten learned of the departure of these missionaries, but it seems clear that the news angered them and shattered their hopes of unifying the Quorum. Brigham Young, remembering their arrival in Kirtland, later said: "As soon as they came I got Marsh to go to Joseph But Patten would [not]. . . . He got his mind prejudiced & when He went to see Joseph David insulted Joseph & Joseph slap[p]ed him in the face & kicked him out of the yard this done David good."¹⁷ It appears that Thomas B. Marsh desired to be the first to introduce the gospel abroad and was jealous that another of his quorum should upstage him.¹⁸

In large measure, difficulties in the Quorum of the Twelve were resolved at the summer meeting in Kirtland, and Marsh's concerns relative to his quorum and their relationship to the First Presidency were satisfactorily addressed in a revelation received by Joseph Smith on 23 July 1837 (D&C 112).¹⁹

After going on a mission to Upper Canada with the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, Thomas remained in Kirtland until late in the fall of 1837, helping with the Church printing office. Ironically, during these months of widespread apostasy when many Church leaders sought to criticize Joseph Smith, Thomas established a close, personal relationship with the Prophet.

Thomas returned to Far West in October 1837 somewhat more poised in his position as President of the Quorum of the Twelve and confident of the Prophet's approval of him. But on arriving in Far West, Thomas came into immediate conflict with Oliver Cowdery,

¹⁵See Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten to Parley P. Pratt, 10 May 1837, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives.

¹⁶These two apostles left Kirtland, Ohio, on 13 June 1837.

¹⁷As reported in Wilford Woodruff Diary, 25 June 1857, Church Archives. Joseph Smith stated on 28 May 1843 that only two of the original Twelve Apostles had not "lifted their heel against" him—namely, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball (see *HC*, 5:412).

¹⁸See Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, 6 September 1837, and Heber C. Kimball to Vilate Kimball, 12 November 1837, both at Church Archives. Thomas Marsh had informed Vilate that the gospel could not be effectually taken to Europe except it be introduced by Apostle Marsh himself. Heber, giving justification for his advance mission, replied: "Still brother Joseph sed it was all right to prepare the way for brother Marsh."

¹⁹See especially D&C 112:2, 3, 10, 15, and 27, which instruct Thomas B. Marsh to humble himself and to recognize that Joseph is his leader; see also D&C 112:16, 17, 21, and 30–33, which acknowledge Marsh's important calling.

David Whitmer, William W. Phelps and John Whitmer. Realizing that the bitter spirit of these influential men could destroy the Church, Thomas sought to purge them from the flock. But his motives appear to not have been pure. Jealous to win greater recognition and influence, Thomas indulged in excessive behavior, all in the name of Joseph Smith. While evidence shows that Oliver and his cohorts were embittered, the means Thomas used did not justify the end. Within months, his foes were out of the Church, and Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten were appointed presidents, pro. tem., of the Church in Missouri. While it would be presumptuous to assume that Thomas Marsh single-handedly expelled these authorities from the Church, he was, however, a major instigator.²⁰

Thomas Marsh temporarily maintained his influence after the Prophet's arrival in Far West in March 1838, but much to his dismay his struggle to remain in control resulted in his undoing.

Many of the settlers in Far West sought control of power and money. Control of property meant greater wealth for those who could sell to the oncoming Saints, and land records indicate Thomas was among a small minority that controlled the property at Far West. Recognizing the problem, Joseph warned property holders of covetousness. But too few paid attention. In his quest for power Thomas suffered from fear as well as jealousy. Because he was extremely sensitive to any kind of criticism, Thomas Marsh finally began to question Joseph's actions. He later admitted, "I meddled with that which was not my business."²¹

Sometime in August or September 1838, an incident occurred which would serve as a major factor in Marsh's apostasy from the Church. His wife, Elizabeth, was accused of unfairly taking cream from the daily milking which she shared with another sister, Lucinda Harris. Although the matter was heard by several priesthood courts, all of them found Sister Marsh guilty of promise-breaking. In a final

²⁰See Far West Record, under dates of 23 December 1837 to 24 February 1838. Oliver Cowdery, referring to his excommunication, wrote: "I believed at the time, and still believe, that ambitious and wicked men, envying the harmony existing between myself and the first elders of the Church, and hoping to get into some other men's birthright, by falsehoods, the most foul and wicked, caused all this difficulty from the beginning to end. They succeeded in getting myself out of the Church; [and] since they themselves have gone to perdition." (See Oliver Cowdery to Brigham Young, 25 December 1843, Church Archives.) Phineas Young, writing to Willard Richards on 14 December 1842, blamed Thomas Marsh and others for Oliver's expulsion, claiming "they told [Joseph] many things prejudicial to Brother Oliver which he had no chance whatever to contradict." Phineas charged these men with seeking to "break him [Cowdery] down, that they might rise thereby." Again in 1844 Phineas accused "Thomas B. Marsh and others at Far West" for Oliver's excommunication. Phineas said that "charges were heaped upon him you know for what." (Phineas Young to Willard Richards, 14 December 1842, and Phineas Young to Brigham Young, 26 November 1844, both in Journal History, under date, Church Archives.)

²¹*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886), 5:207; hereafter cited as *JD*.

move, Bishop Edward Partridge pleaded with her "to make things right and offered her time to do so,"²² but Sister Marsh adamantly claimed she was innocent. When Joseph Smith bluntly told the sister that she had lied to the court and would be disfellowshipped, an indignant Thomas refused to hear of it. George A. Smith, apostle and Church historian, remembering the occasion, detailed the essential facts:

An appeal was taken from the Teacher to the Bishop, and a regular Church trial was had. President Marsh did not consider that the Bishop had done him and his lady justice, for they [the courts] decided the strippings were wrongfully saved, and that the woman had violated her covenant.

Marsh immediately took an appeal to the High Council, who investigated the question with much patience, and I assure you they were a grave body. Marsh being extremely anxious to maintain the character of his wife, as he was the President of the Twelve Apostles, and a great man in Israel, made a desperate defence, but the High Council finally confirmed the Bishop's decision.

Marsh, not being satisfied, took an appeal to the First Presidency of the Church, and Joseph and his Counsellors had to sit upon the case, and they approved the decision of the High Council. This little affair, you will observe, kicked up a considerable breeze, and Thomas B. Marsh then declared that he would sustain the character of his wife, even if he had to go to hell for it.²³

As might well be imagined, the "strippings affair" so humiliated Thomas Marsh that he could hardly face his associates. His great desire to win the admiration of the Saints, and especially the Prophet, now quickly began to sour. Thomas later confessed to the Saints in the Salt Lake Bowery that his zeal had begun to transform into a malignant jealousy:

I became jealous of the Prophet, and then I saw double, and overlooked everything that was right, and spent all my time in looking for the evil. . . . I was blinded, and I thought I saw a beam in brother Joseph's eye, but it was nothing but a mote, and my own eye was filled with the beam. . . . I got mad, and I wanted everybody else to be mad. I talked with Brother Brigham and Brother Heber, and I wanted them to be mad like myself; and I saw they were not mad, and I got madder still. . . . Brother Brigham, with a cautious look, said, "Are you the leader of the Church, brother Thomas?" I answered, "no." "Well then," said he, "Why do you not let that alone?"²⁴

²²Henry W. Bigler Journal, under date, Church Archives.

²³George A. Smith, 6 April 1856, *JD*, 3:283-84.

²⁴Thomas B. Marsh, 6 September 1857, *JD*, 5:207.

Embarrassed over the “strippings affair,” Thomas Marsh threatened to leave the Church. When Joseph learned of this, Thomas said that “he got me into a tight corner I could hardly evade. He put the questions directly to me, whether I was going to leave.” But instead of working for a reconciliation, Thomas Marsh responded with contempt: “Joseph, when you see me leave the Church, you will see a good fellow leave it.”²⁵

Stunned by these events in his life, Thomas Marsh possessed ambivalent feelings about leaving the Church. He accompanied a group of Saints to Daviess County, Missouri, on 16 October 1838 to abate reported mob activities against the Saints there. But his heart was not in it, and he questioned the legality of their actions. “Pretending there was something urgent at home,”²⁶ Thomas returned to Far West on 21 October 1838, and encouraged by Orson Hyde he decided to leave the Church. Believing that Joseph should not have allowed the “cream” trial, and being persuaded that the Prophet had directed extralegal activities in Daviess County, Thomas Marsh lost what faith he had left. His great love for the Church and its leaders had now turned to hate, and with Orson Hyde he left Far West on 22 October for Richmond, Missouri.²⁷

Consistent with the pattern of other prominent dissenters, Thomas Marsh did not withdraw quietly. He now sought for revenge. Venting his anger, he swore before a Ray County, Missouri, magistrate that the Mormon people, and Joseph Smith in particular, were hostile toward the State of Missouri. While this affidavit is relegated to a mere footnote in the *History of the Church*, it contributed greatly to the Mormon expulsion from Missouri in 1838.²⁸

Thomas B. Marsh remained in Missouri, finally settling in Howard County. There and in Grundy County, Missouri, Thomas lived on the edge of survival, teaching Biblical geography. Not being able to free his mind of Mormonism, Thomas kept abreast of the progress of the Church as much as possible. After the death of his wife in 1854, he entertained serious thoughts of returning to the Church, and finally in January 1857 he set out for Council Bluffs, Iowa. Here he made his peace with local Church leader George W. Harris and asked to be accepted as a member. Brother Harris directed

²⁵“History of Thomas B. Marsh,” Church Archives.

²⁶Journal and Record of Heber C. Kimball (1838–1839), under date, Church Archives.

²⁷See Thomas B. Marsh to Lewis Abbott, 25 October 1838, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives.

²⁸Marsh’s affidavit, dated 24 October 1838, is cited in *HC*, 3:167, and published in full in *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons and the Evidence Given before the Hon. Austin A. King . . .* (Fayette, Missouri: By order of the General Assembly, 1841), pp. 57–59. George A. Smith credited Marsh’s defection and sworn testimony against Joseph Smith as a major factor in the Mormon expulsion (see *JD*, 3:284).

Thomas to the home of Wandle Mace at Florence, Nebraska. Although Brother Mace had entertained bad feelings towards Thomas Marsh, he admitted that Marsh's "humble attitude, and speech disarmed me, his sorrowful countenance, his palsied frame, and above all his humiliating confession, whipped me. I felt more like weeping."²⁹ Since local leaders of the Church at Florence were not sure how Brigham Young and other members of the Twelve would view Marsh's return, they invited Thomas to write to the First Presidency for permission to be received into the Church in full faith and fellowship. Marsh's letter is a precious historical document and is included here in its entirety.³⁰

Florence, Douglas Co, Nebraska Ter[ritory]
May 5th [18]/57

Heber C Kimball

Dear Sir,

You see by the caption to this, where I am. I left Missouri Having lost my wife some three years since I began to awake to a sense of my situation; you will, perhaps, say why you slept a long time or was a long time in waking and would say truly for so it is for I have, at least, been grooping in darkness fo[r] so [*sic*] these 18 years.

I left Grundy Co, Missouri in the beginning of January A.D. /57, set my face Zionward and traveled, mostly on foot having a determination that I would go to Salt Lake, God being my helper, & there throw myself at the feet of the apostles and implore their forgiveness and ask for admittance into the House of the Lord; into the church of latterday Saints & that I would say to them I know that I have sin[n]ed against Heaven and in thy sight and have rendered myself unworthy of your confidence; or of a place in the family of Heaven nevertheless make me thy servant lest I perish for I know that in my Father,s house there is bread enough and to spare while here I perish with hunger.

I came on with very good courage until after I had been here for some time; the longer I remain here & the more I examine into your progress since I left you the stronger I become in my confidence & the stronger I become in faith & the lighter things appear to me, the more clearly do I discover that I deserve no place among you in the church even as the lowest member; but I cannot live long so without a reconciliation with the 12 [apostles] and the Church whom I have injured O Bretheren once Bretheren!! How can I leave this world without your forgiveness Can I have it Can I have it? Something seems to say within yes O then hasten and signify it by writing the word yes to me & then O

²⁹Wandle Mace Journal, under date, Church Archives.

³⁰This letter is located at Church Archives and is published by permission.

Joy I shall be content. I have met with G[eorge] W. Harris and a reconciliation has taken place with us,³¹ and when that was accomplished I was so overjoyed that I was constrained to say in my heart truly this is an evidence that the Lord loves me after all my rebellion & my sins. I know what I have done a mission was laid upon me & I have never filled it and now I fear it is too late but it is filled by another, I see, the Lord could get along very well without me and He has lost nothing by my falling out of the ranks; But O what have I lost?! Riches Greater Riches than all this world or many planets like this could afford but O bretheren; can you speak one word of comfort to me Can I be saved at all in the Kingdom of God Can I find peace among you O if I can but enjoy your smiles and the smil[e]s of the Church & of Jesus I shall be content to depart or remain in so great peace The Lord has been mindful of me and altho I was very stubborn He has followed me up He has visited me with Scourging & with visions & dreams, Bretheren O that I were worthy to call you bretheren! but [what] shall I call you? You run very near to me I love you better than I do any set of mortals on this earth. you have been diligent in accomplishing the work given you while I, miserable me! have played time away among harlot churches only seeking for nourishment to my soul where there was no bread of life & I Love you & hate myself. I wait here, at Florence anxiously for a letter addressed to your Old & now truly unworthy & truly sincere friend

/s/ Thomas B. Marsh

Heber C. Kimball
Salt Lake City

P.S. My Love to all the saints & may the richest blessings of the fullness of the everlasting Gospel be with and rest upon you now and forever more

Amen

T.B.M.

Upon receiving official approval, Thomas B. Marsh was rebaptized at Papyeo Creek (Nebraska), while en route to Salt Lake Valley, by Andrew Cunningham on 16 July 1857. Thomas was among one of the final Mormon groups to pass Fort Laramie before the arrival of Johnston's Army.³²

On 6 September 1857, two days after Marsh's arrival in the Valley, a large congregation which had assembled for Sabbath worship voted unanimously to receive Brother Marsh into full fellowship. A stroke had paralyzed part of his body so that one of his arms

³¹The reconciliation has reference to the disagreement over the strippings. The case involved Elizabeth Marsh and Lucinda Morgan Harris, wife of George W. Harris.

³²His arrival was noted in the Historian's Office Journal, 4 September 1857: "Thos B. Marsh arrived with a part of Walker's Co. about 4 p.m."

drooped unnaturally. Those who saw him described him as a "poor, decrepid, broken down, old man."³³ While President Brigham Young had compassion for this one-time senior Quorum member, he nevertheless seized upon the moment to point out to the Saints how righteous living had bestowed upon him a healthy frame in marked contrast to Marsh's wretched appearance. The illustration was not subtle, but Thomas Marsh seemed to take his medicine well.³⁴ "He told me yesterday, that the Christians might hang up their fiddle in regard to their being no Catholic . . . Purgatory," recounted Brigham, "but brother Marsh says that there is such a place, and that he has been in it during the past eighteen years. . . . In conversing with brother Marsh," Brigham continued, "I find that he is about the same Thomas that he always was—full of anecdotes and chit-chat. He could hardly converse for ten minutes without telling an anecdote. His voice and style of conversation are familiar to me."³⁵

The day after he was voted back into the Church Brother Marsh formally dedicated himself to the Lord:

I, Thomas B. Marsh, do hereby, this day, Sept. 7th AD 1857, consecrate and dedicate myself soul, body and spirit with all I possess on earth, to the Lord praying to the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob to set me apart or sanctify me to be exclusively his to do whatsoever he should require of me and to give me Grace to sanctify the Lord of hosts in my heart that I might Love him with all my heart soul mind, strength and understanding Amen.³⁶

One month after his arrival in Salt Lake Valley, Thomas was married to Hannah Adams (4 October 1857), and the couple soon settled in Spanish Fork, where they acquired a small adobe house. Here Brother Marsh attempted, without success, to establish a school. Though having received some financial help from Bishop John L. Butler, the Marshes were scarcely able to sustain life. By late fall of 1859, meager circumstances prompted Thomas to request further assistance. His petition reflected his penitent spirit:

[I write] not in a spirit of complaining of any person neither of murmuring against the providence of my Heavenly Father; no! It is good enough for me for I have sin[n]ed and made many crooked paths and I would rather kiss the chastning hand and thank Him that it is as well with me as it is for He in his providence has brought me to the Valies of

³³John Taylor, 9 August 1857, *JD*, 5:115.

³⁴Brigham Young, 6 Septembr 1857, *JD*, 5:210.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶Dedication of Thomas B. Marsh, 7 September 1857, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives. I am indebted to Ronald Esplin for locating this document.

these mountains! fed and clothed me and kept me alive until now, given me a name and place among his people and restored me, vile as I have been, [to] His Everlasting Priesthood, notwithstanding I so foolishly and so ignominiously once threw it away and cast it behind my back.³⁷

His request did not go unheeded.³⁸

On 11 March 1859, Thomas B. Marsh was re-ordained an elder, and by November 1861 he had been ordained a high priest.³⁹ In the Endowment House on 1 November 1862, he received his endowment and was sealed to his wife, Hannah.⁴⁰ It was about this same time that the couple opted to settle near Ogden. Thomas was placed in the care of David M. Stuart, Ogden First Ward.⁴¹ Though almost wholly supported by the Church until his death in January 1866 at Ogden, Thomas Baldwin Marsh "died in good faith," having once again accepted the principles he had espoused nearly thirty-six years earlier in Fayette, New York. He had learned by sad experience the hazards of aspiring to the honors of men, the dangers of exercising unrighteous dominion, and the consequences of uncontrolled criticism of those in authority.⁴²

³⁷Thomas B. Marsh to John L. Butler, 26 October 1859, Edward Hunter Collection, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³⁸See John L. Butler to Edward Hunter, 3 November 1859, Edward Hunter Collection, University of Utah. "Fast Day Offerings, Spanish Fork Branch," at Church Archives, reveals that the Marshes were frequent recipients of eggs, flour, meat, and butter.

³⁹"Record of the Genealogies of the Elders Quorum of Spanish Fork," Church Archives.

⁴⁰Endowment House Sealing Record, Genealogical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁴¹Walter C. Lichfield, "Thomas B. Marsh, Physician to the Church" (M. S. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956), p. 167.

⁴²There is little question that the passages dealing with abuses of priesthood power in D&C 121:34-40 had direct reference to Thomas B. Marsh, as well as other high level Church leaders. The section was initially part of a letter written by the Prophet in March 1839, but has since been canonized.