

progression. Progression apparently occurred in the premortal life, for most spirits there chose to follow Christ and some were noble and great, while others chose to follow Lucifer. Entering mortality affords opportunities for further progression. Obtaining a PHYSICAL BODY is a crucial step, enabling a person to experience physical sensations of all kinds and to progress in knowledge and understanding, all of which will rise with the person in the Resurrection (D&C 130:18). Brigham Young taught that even in mortality, “We are in eternity” (*JD* 10:22), and the object of this existence is “to learn to enjoy more, and to increase in knowledge and experience” (*JD* 14:228). “When we have learned to live according to the full value of the life we now possess, we are prepared for further advancement in the scale of eternal progression—for a more glorious and exalted sphere” (*JD* 9:168).

Life is never static. “One must progress or retrograde. One cannot stand still. Activity is the law of growth, and growth, progress, is the law of life” (A. Bowen, in *Christ’s Ideals for Living*, O. Tanner, ed., Salt Lake City, 1980, p. 368). A person’s attitude about “‘eternal progression’ will largely determine his philosophy of life . . . exalting, increasing, expanding and extending broader and broader until we can know as we are known, see as we are seen” (Young, *JD* 16:165).

At the Resurrection and Judgment, people will be assigned a DEGREE OF GLORY. Further progress is believed possible within each degree. Marriage and family life, however, continue only in the CELESTIAL KINGDOM, allowing “eternal increase” through having spirit children (see ETERNAL LIVES, ETERNAL INCREASE). “All this and more that cannot enter into our hearts to conceive is promised to the faithful, and are but so many stages in that ceaseless progression of eternal lives” (Young, *JD* 10:5).

No official Church teaching attempts to specify all the ways in which God progresses in his exalted spheres; “there is no end to [His] works, neither to [His] words” (Moses 1:38). God’s glory and power are enhanced as his children progress in glory and power (see Moses 1:39; Young, *JD* 10:5). Ideas have been advanced to explain how God might progress in knowledge and still be perfect and know all things (see FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD; OMNIPOTENT GOD).

The concept of eternal progression is a salient feature of the gospel of Jesus Christ, readily distin-

guishable from traditional Christian theology. The philosophical views of the Middle Ages were basically incompatible with such a concept, and the idea of progress that emerged in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment was that of social evolution (Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, London, 1932). The traditional Christian view has held that those in heaven enter “a state of eternal, inactive joy. In the presence of God they would worship him and sing praises to him eternally, but nothing more” (Widtsoe, p. 142). Latter-day Saints, however, constantly seek personal and righteous improvement not only by establishing ZION in this world, but by anticipating the continuation of progression eternally.

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ETHER

See: Book of Mormon: Book of Ether

ETHICS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is typically involved in three levels of ethical concern: the theory of values; the foundations of moral decision; and the integration of personal and professional codes of ethics, such as those relating to medical, military, or governmental service. The inner dynamism of the Church and its increasing involvement with a confluence of cultures point beyond closed ethical systems. Latter-day Saints espouse an ethic of divine approbation; to discern the will of God and receive assurance that one is acting under God’s approval are the ceaseless quest of DISCIPLESHIP. This may be called Spirit-guided morality.

The scriptures affirm that questions of the good and the right are intertwined with questions of the holy and with the primal Jewish-Christian imperative “Be ye holy for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16; cf. Lev. 11:44). Daily tensions between the sacred and the secular are part of the ethical dilemma,

and Latter-day Saints seek help from the scriptures and classical sources.

Philosophers often distinguish two approaches to ethics: teleology and deontology. The teleological approach appraises the morality of an act by its relation to an end or purpose, while the deontological approach understands morality primarily in terms of duty or response to law. In Christian ethics, these views have proved difficult to reconcile. For Latter-day Saints, however, both obedience to divine imperatives and pursuit of ultimate happiness are correlative elements in the maturation of human beings. The conflict between duty and desire is overcome as one grows closer to God through faith and service and finds joy in upholding divine counsels and commandments.

Ethicists likewise contrast performance and motive in the religious life. Rabbinical tradition, for example, emphasizes the continuous study and scrupulous observance of Torah, while Reformation Protestantism stresses motive. Again, Latter-day Saints reject this perennial division; both are crucial in the religious life. "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). Grace transforms men toward a Christlike nature. But purity of heart is manifest in scripture study and vigorous service; thus, mastery of law and inner change go hand in hand as components of discipleship and joyful living.

Classical Christian thought encourages the cultivation of habits and dispositions tied to both intellectual and moral virtues. Both ancient and modern revelations advocate such virtues as "knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence" (2 Pet. 1:5-7; cf. D&C 4:5), and all the Christlike attributes of the Sermon on the Mount. There are correlative warnings against besetting vices: pride, unrighteous dominion, lust, anger, unforgiveness, covetousness, idleness, halfheartedness. The Saints are constantly reminded to "seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God and to establish his righteousness" (JST Matt. 6:38). NEPHI₁ and MORONI₂, both prophets of the Book of Mormon, teach, as does the apostle Paul, the importance of faith, hope, and charity, which is defined as "the pure love of Christ" (1 Cor. 13:1-13; 2 Ne. 31:20; Moro. 7:21-48).

Much ethical discussion today revolves around whether there are any external and binding sanctions for ethics and morality. In the theological

context, there is the classical dilemma of whether God's will is right because he wills it or whether he wills it because it is right. Latter-day Saints are not committed to certain theories of natural law. Modern scriptures suggest that ethical laws and "bounds" and conditions exist independent of God (D&C 88:3-40; see LAW: DIVINE AND ETERNAL LAW). They also teach that God both institutes laws and adapts them (TPJS, p. 320). Both the meaning and the application of law in changing circumstances require revelation of the present will of God.

LDS ethics are neither extremely atomistic nor social-communitarian but recognize the importance of both the individual and social aspects of human existence. "And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there [the eternal world], only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy" (D&C 130:2).

Ethical discussion often focuses on how one comes to know what is good or right. Appeals to intuition or conscience are opposed by radical conventionalism, which presumes that values are reducible to custom and that the mores of a given group or individual are not known (discovered) but simply preferred. Latter-day Saints respect conscience, and the scriptures reiterate that conscience must be refined and directed by the Holy Ghost. They consider ethical maturity to derive from experience; including religious experience; from rational and practical deliberation; and from the mandates, both general and specific, that recur in scripture and the counsels of the prophets.

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F. NEIL BRADY

EUROPE, THE CHURCH IN

[This article discusses the establishment and growth of the Church in continental Europe. See separate articles on the Church in the British Isles, the Middle East, and Scandinavia.]

The Protestant countries of Western Europe—Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands—played a major role in the growth and success of the Church from the beginnings in