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CATHERINE CORMAN PARRY

ETERNAL LIVES, ETERNAL INCREASE

“Eternal lives” is a term that refers to the right and power to beget children after the resurrection, granted to those who are exalted in the highest degree of the CELESTIAL KINGDOM. This is an aspect of ETERNAL PROGRESSION. “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase” (D&C 131:1–4).

This distinctive doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was taught by Joseph SMITH and was especially articulated on May 16–17, 1843, at Ramus, Illinois, where he often visited and preached. Conversing on spiritual topics with a small party of friends, the Prophet Joseph Smith shed light on the concept of eternal increase: “Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory” (*TPJS*, pp. 300–301). Doctrine and Covenants, section 131, is largely concerned with this subject, and was first included in 1876.

A husband and wife who are married in the new and everlasting covenant and sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE under the proper PRIESTHOOD authority are promised that they shall inherit “thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers,” and their “glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19). They are likened to gods, having no end. They share in the promises of eternal posterity made to ABRAHAM and SARAH: “Both in the world

and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars” (D&C 132:30).

Brigham YOUNG, in 1862, spoke of eternal lives, stating that the opportunity to become heirs to all things, and to become a “King of kings and Lord of lords, . . . is promised to the faithful, and are but so many stages in that ceaseless progression of eternal lives. . . . There will be no end to the increase of the faithful” (*JD* 10:5). He described such a situation as a pleasing one, creating happiness beyond mortal comprehension. In 1864 he elaborated: “In like manner, every faithful son of God, becomes, as it were, Adam to the race that springs from his loins, when they are embraced in the covenants and blessings of the Holy Priesthood . . . in the progress of eternal lives. . . . We have not yet received our kingdoms, neither will we, until we have finished our work on the earth, passed through the ordeals, are brought up by the power of the resurrection, and are crowned with glory and eternal lives” (*JD* 10:355).

Latter-day Saints believe that all worthy men and women, through righteous living and being sealed by the power of the priesthood, will in ETERNAL LIFE inherit, with ADAM and EVE, ABRAHAM and SARAH, and all the faithful, those same blessings and enjoy a continuation of seeds forever, or eternal increase.

SHIRLEY S. RICKS

ETERNAL PROGRESSION

The principle of eternal progression cannot be precisely defined or comprehended, yet it is fundamental to the LDS worldview. The phrase “eternal progression” first occurs in the discourses of Brigham YOUNG. It embodies many concepts taught by Joseph SMITH, especially in his KING FOLLETT DISCOURSE. It is based on the proposition that “there is no such thing as principle, power, wisdom, knowledge, life, position, or anything that can be imagined, that remains stationary—they must increase or decrease” (Young, *JD* 1:350).

Progression takes many forms. In one sense, eternal progression refers to everything that people learn and experience by their choices as they progress from PREMORTAL LIFE, to MORTALITY, to postmortal spirit life, and to a resurrected state in the presence of God. Personal progression is possible in each of these states, but not the same kind of