

The Eternity of Sex.

By James E. Talmage, of the Council of the Twelve.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms as reasonable, scriptural, and true, the doctrine of the eternity of sex among the children of God. The distinction between male and female is no condition peculiar to the relatively brief period of mortal life; it was an essential characteristic of our pre-existent state, even as it shall continue after death, in both the disembodied and resurrected states.

That birth or even its antecedent, conception, in no wise marks the creation of a being who before that event did not exist, is abundantly attested by the revealed word; it is positively declared that every child born to earth lived as an individual spirit, male or female, in the primeval world. There is no accident or chance, due to purely physical conditions, by which the sex of the unborn is determined; the body takes form as male or female according to the sex of the spirit whose appointment it is to tenant that body as a tabernacle formed of the elements of earth, through which means alone the individual may enter upon the indispensable course of human experience, probation, and training.

That the vital distinction of sex characterizes life on earth cannot be questioned; its antemortal and post-mortal existence may be thought by some to require demonstration.

In the first chapter of Genesis, verse 27, we read:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The next chapter makes plain

the fact that the placing of man upon the earth, clothed with a body of earthly material, was a subsequent event; thus as stated in verses 4-7:

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

As shown to Moses in vision, and as subsequently revealed to Joseph Smith, the essential facts comprised in the scriptures above quoted are set forth with somewhat greater plainness as follows:

"And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them." (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 2:27.)

Further:

"And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for

in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air; but I, the Lord God, spake, and there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word." (Moses 3:4-7.)

These scriptures attest a state of existence preceding mortality, in which the spirit-children of God lived, doubtless with distinguishing personal characteristics, certainly with the distinction of sex, for "male and female created He them," spiritually, even "before they were [created] naturally upon the face of the earth." It is plain that this spiritual creation of mankind embraced the entire human family and not alone the pair ordained to be the first mortal parents of men; for it is expressly stated that "the Lord God had created all the children of men" before a man had been placed upon the earth "to till the ground;" yea, even before the earth was tillable, or capable of supporting the vegetation necessary for human food.

In passing, one may inquire: Is it not in harmony with the genius of these scriptures to infer that the spirits, since known in their embodied state as the human family, lived, developed, and progressed, as sentient beings of varied degrees of intelligence and capability, within the limitations of that primeval sphere of activity; and that in due time they have been and are yet being sent to earth to gain the experiences incident to mortality? For scriptural affirmation supporting this inference, consider that marvelous revelation given to Abraham,

wherein the Lord God declared that the Divine purpose in forming the earth, from materials before existent but unorganized, was to provide a place whereon His children, then existing as spirits, could dwell, that they might be proved as to integrity and righteous effort; that among those spirit-children there were many who were relatively noble and great, and that these were chosen and fore-ordained to labors of special importance in the course of their mundane life.^a

The continuation of individual existence beyond the grave is even more abundantly declared, though perhaps not more specifically attested, in scripture, than is the fact of antemortal life. All Christendom professes belief in life after death, and accepts to some degree, though not infrequently in distorted form, the doctrine of the resurrection. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims the plain, simple, uncorrupted, scriptural truth of a literal resurrection of the body, by which the spirit that had been disembodied by death will again be clothed with a tabernacle of flesh and bones identical in form with the body that was laid down. This comprises as a necessary condition the continuation of the individual existence of the spirit, as a separate and distinct being, intelligent and progressive, during the interval between death and the resurrection. The literalness of the resurrection is explicitly taught by Alma, a Nephite prophet, in the forceful declaration that in the resurrected body every limb and joint shall be restored to the possession of the spirit, and that "even a hair of the head shall not be lost, but all things shall

^aSee Abraham 3:21-26. For special study of the antemortal existence of the human family, see the author's "Articles of Faith," pp. 195-199.

be restored to their proper and perfect frame^b

With such definite word as to the actuality of a bodily resurrection, which shall come to all, righteous and sinner alike, is it conceivable that the essential differences of sex shall be eliminated? Children of God have comprised male and female from the beginning. Man is man and woman is woman, fundamentally, unchangeably, eternally. Each is indispensable to the other and to the accomplishment of the purposes of God, the crowning glory of which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39).

The status of woman in the world is a subject of present-day discussion and an element of current social unrest; it is, however, by no means a new topic. The female sex is not infrequently referred to as the weaker of the two. As gaged by physical standards this classification may be essentially correct. And be it said to the discredit and shame of the stronger sex, man through the centuries gone has been prone to use his superior strength to the oppression of woman. She has suffered the greatest humiliation during periods of spiritual darkness, when the Gospel of Christ was forgotten. Woman occupies a position all her own in the eternal economy of the Creator; and in that position she is as truly superior to man as is he to her in his appointed place. Woman shall yet come to her own, exercising her rights and her privileges as a sanctified investiture which none shall dare profane.

It is part of woman's mission in this life to occupy a secondary posi-

tion of authority in the activities of the world, both in the home and in the affairs of public concern. Of this condition, explanation and justification may be found in the fact that in every organization, however simple or complex, there must needs be a centralization of authority, in short, a head. The secular law recognizes the husband as the head of the household, and theoretically at least holds him accountable for his administration. That many men fail in their station, that some are weak and unfit, that in particular instances the wife may be the more capable and in divers ways the better of the pair, should not be considered as evidencing impropriety or unrighteousness in the established order as a general condition. Woman should be regarded, not in the sense of privilege but of right, as the associate of man in the community of the home, and they two should form the governing head of the family institution, while to each separately pertain duties and functions which the other is less qualified to discharge. Weakness or inefficiency on the part of either in specified instances must not be taken to impugn the wisdom by which the organization of the home and of society has been planned.

In the restored Church of Jesus Christ, the Holy Priesthood is conferred, as an individual bestowal, upon men only, and this in accordance with Divine requirement. It is not given to woman to exercise the authority of the Priesthood independently; nevertheless, in the sacred endowments associated with the ordinances pertaining to the House of the Lord, woman shares with man the blessings of the Priesthood. When the frailties and imperfections of mortality are left behind, in the glorified state of the blessed hereafter, husband and wife

^bAlma 40:23; read the entire chapter. For a special treatment of the "Resurrection of the Body," and the literalness thereof, see the author's "Articles of Faith," pp. 391-403.

will administer in their respective stations, seeing and understanding alike, and co-operating to the full in the government of their family kingdom. Then shall woman be recompensed in rich measure for all the injustice that womanhood has endured in mortality. Then shall woman reign by Divine right, a queen in the resplendent realm of her glorified state, even as exalted man shall stand, priest and king unto the Most High God. Mortal eye cannot see nor mind comprehend the beauty, glory, and majesty of a righteous woman made perfect in the celestial kingdom of God.

Through the sure word of revealed truth we learn of the actual relationship between God and man, and that this is the literal relationship of parent to child. The spirits of men are the offspring of Deity, born in the antemortal world and endowed with the Divine birthright of eternal development and progression, in which course of advancement the life on earth is but a stage. The glorious possibilities of man's attainment are indicated in the admonition of the Lord Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48).

To become perfect as God is perfect is to attain the state, power, dignity, and authority of godship. Plainly there is a way provided by which the child of God may follow the footsteps of the Father, and in time—sometime in the distant eternities—be as that Divine Father is. Even as Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, endured the experiences of mortality, passed the portals of death and became a resurrected Being, so the Father before Him had trodden the same path of progression from manhood to Godhood, and today sits enthroned in the heavens by right of achievement.

He is the Eternal Father and with Him, crowned with glory and majesty, is the eternal Mother. They twain are the parents of the spirit-children for whose schooling in the lessons of mortality this earth was framed. When God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," "male and female created He them;" and male and female shall they be, to and beyond the resurrection, forever.

Eternal exaltation is the assured attainment of those who obey in its fulness the whole law of the Gospel of Christ; theirs it is to become like unto their Celestial Parents.

"Then shall they be Gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be Gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them." (Doctrine and Covenants 132:20).

Is there anything inconsistent, unnatural, or even surprising in the fact that offspring may develop to the status and spiritual stature of the parents? Would not the contrary be an exception to the recognized order of life? Such complete achievement, however, is possible only to children who pursue the course of development that the parents have followed,—to those only who resolutely advance, ever obedient, through struggle and strife, endurance and suffering, denial and conquest, as those who went before had to do.

The association of man and woman in marriage may be a union for mortality only, or for this life and the hereafter, according to the authority by which the relationship is sanctioned and solemnized. A marriage contracted under human law alone, while legally binding and valid on earth, is terminated by the

death-summons. This condition is expressly recognized and specified in the ordinary ritual of marriage, in the pronouncement of the officiating authority to the contracting parties, "*Until death do you part.*"

To be effective and binding in the eternal worlds, the union of man and woman in marriage must be solemnized by an authority greater than any that can be established or invoked through human institutions. This superior authority must of necessity be given from the heavens, wherein its administration is to be recognized. Such is found in the Holy Priesthood only. Marriage covenants authorized and sealed by that God-given power, endure, if the parties thereto are true to their troth, not through mortal life alone,

but through time and all eternity. Thus the worthy husband and wife who have been sealed under the everlasting covenant shall come forth in the day of the resurrection to receive their heritage of glory, immortality, and eternal lives.

It is the blessed privilege of resurrected beings who attain an exaltation in the celestial kingdom to enjoy the glory of endless increase, to become the parents of generations of spirit-offspring, and to direct their development through probationary stages analogous to those through which they themselves have passed.

Eternal are the purposes of God; never-ending progression is provided for His children, worlds without end.

Thoughts and Remembrances.

By Emmeline B. Wells.

(General President Relief Society; Editor "Woman's Exponent" 1874-1914.)

A quarter of a century ago, a few young women met together in a delightful home in this city of the Saints to consider the advisability of starting a magazine. The Young Men had already made a venture of the same kind and were doing fairly well, and there seemed no good reason why the young women should not enter the field of literature; accordingly, after discussing the matter seriously, a decision was reached and the plunge was made into the broad field of literary endeavor. An editor was carefully selected, and, full of the enthusiasm of youth and inexperience, they launched forth and spread their sail to the breeze, though naturally oppressed with some timidity at venturing upon so wide, uncertain and tempestuous a sea.

Today, it is quite impossible to estimate the great good to the young women of the Church, and others in and out of the association, which this magazine has been able to render, since its establishment as a guide and source of intellectual growth and education. It is indeed, a well-spring of delight and of joy to young and old. It has reached many lands and been hailed everywhere with enthusiasm. Its worth cannot be calculated.

It is difficult to more than hint at what the magazine has meant to those in immediate touch with it, as well as to the vaster number who comprise its list of readers. Suffice it to say, it has been a diligent sower of good seed; but the harvest is so great and covers so large a field, that the reapers, however in-