

Saturday afternoon  
April 19, 2008

Dear Matthew,

I thought about you as I drove home today.

Occasionally I have an idea that first forms deep in my mind then sits there and slowly incubates. But it never quite becomes “my truth” until it is born into words. Then the words seem to spring out almost as though they were spontaneous, even though their roots are very, very deep. That happened to me today when I was thinking out loud about you. I was looking at your companion, avoiding your eyes, because I knew that if I looked at you the words would be overpowered by the gratitude, and so might never become a coherent expression of the thought. I said something like this:

Our very lives testify that this is true. As we acknowledge the eternal reality of a dear friend we become more alive. We begin to rediscover the eternal truth of who and what that friend was, is, and will be. That recognition opens a window through which we can get a glimpse of our own eternal Self. The light that emanates from the soul of one’s friend penetrates just a bit of the veil that clouds our memory of our own past eternal self. It reveals a shining new aspect of a forgotten portion of who and what we were before we came into this world. It does that by teaching us who our friend was and how dearly we loved him. As we re-experience the light that is his personality and goodness; we feel again the love we shared for each other before we came into mortality. The friendship brings more truth, light, and love that blend anew into a unity of joy. It gives new vibrance to our lives and helps us overcome the loneliness of this otherwise dreary world. Thus the friendship makes both beings more complete—more of what and who we were.

Matthew, you are that to me. I count it one of the great blessings of this life that I know and love you while we are both here in this world.

That idea, now formed into words, is so important to me that I want to incorporate it into my book. When you read it there, please remember that it was originally, and always will be a description of my feelings for you.

You are a remarkably good young man and I love you very much,

LeGrand

Sunday afternoon  
April 20, 2008

Dear Matthew,

After I wrote yesterday's note to you and decided I wanted to include it in my book, I had to create a context in the book where it could fit. I thought you might like to see it in that context—because it is also about you.

The resurrection of the earth and all else the Lord has created is a gift of the Saviour's atonement. However the quality of one's resurrection is conditional upon the spiritual truth, light, and love one has chosen to assimilate along the way.

It appears that love, light, and truth are equivalents—they come from God and are expressions of his glory. The conclusion that they are actually the same thing is easy to come by. "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." That is, truth is knowledge of all reality in sacred time and space. The Saviour is the Spirit of Truth, and "he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ...which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space" (D&C 88:7-12, 93:24-26). Thus, both truth and light permeate and sustain everything in the universe. The fact that God's love is also everywhere is a given that needs no proof. Since his light, truth, and love are everywhere and in every individual, they either occupy the same space at the same time, or else they are the same thing. If the latter is correct, then the differences we perceive are simply ways we have of describing godliness. Joy is the product of truth/light/love. It is most meaningful when it is shared. The more we recognize and assimilate the truth/light/love of others, the greater the joy we and they experience. The ultimate expanse of that joy is described by the Prophet Joseph this way:

- 1 When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves.
- 2 And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy (D&C130:1-2).

Our very lives testify that this is true. As we acknowledge the eternal reality of a dear friend we become more alive. We begin to rediscover the eternal truth of who and what that friend was, is, and will be. That recognition opens a window through which we can get a glimpse of our own eternal Self. The light that emanates from the soul of one's friend penetrates just a bit of the veil that clouds our memory of our own past eternal self. It reveals a shining new aspect of a forgotten portion of who and what we were before we came into this world. It does that by teaching us who our friend was and how dearly we loved him. As we re-experience the light that is his personality and goodness; we feel again the love we shared for each other before we came into mortality. The friendship brings more truth, light, and love that blend anew into a unity of joy. It gives new vibrance to our lives and helps us overcome the loneliness of this

otherwise dreary world. Thus the friendship makes both beings more complete—more of what and who we were. The friend’s light seems also to extend a beckoning hand through the veil of death that obscures the hope of our eternal future.

That beckoning hand and the different ways we might respond to it reflect the immortal words of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

The World Stands out on either side  
No wider than the heart is wide;  
Above the world is stretched the sky, –  
No higher than the soul is high.<sup>1</sup>

Not everyone sees. Not everyone listens. Not everyone reaches for the hand. Not everyone is the same. Consequently, the reason there must be differences in the three degrees of resurrected glory is that there must ultimately be a place where everyone can find an absolute compatibility between the quality of his own spiritual self and the quality of his physical person<sup>2</sup>—for the overriding object of creation is the perfection of both. To understand this, “perfection” must be defined in terms of an unimpaired harmony both within the person and between him and his environment. Thus, the “immortality” that distinguishes each of the three degrees of glory is a kind of cultural unity and individual wholeness.

“Eternal life” is an enlargement of immortality. Among the gods in the celestial world the perfection of that internal unity extends beyond the reaches of one’s Self. Without losing the uniqueness of one’s own personality, the fullness of truth, light, love, and joy in celestial glory becomes both the product and the expression of the “sociality which exists among us here [and] will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C130:1-2).

Some years ago, when I was visiting with Elder Oaks, he asked me why I wanted to go to the Celestial Kingdom. I responded that I wanted to be with my friends. During the next General Conference he talked about that. He said that he had asked several people and gave examples of their responses. Mine was among his examples (but of course, he mentioned no names). He said all of these were good reasons, but inadequate. He said the real reason should be because we love Heavenly Father and the Saviour. I smiled to myself and thought, “Elder Oaks, I think you missed my point. That’s why my friends and I will be there together.” I believe being in the Celestial world will be a kind of eternal embrace.

I sure love you lots.

LeGrand

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<sup>1</sup>Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Renascence* in Roy J. Cook, ed., *One Hundred and One Famous Poems* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1997), 166-70.

<sup>2</sup>This is all explained in D&C 88:1-45.