

Ashley, I wrote this Monday, after I got home from having lunch with you, but decided to let it rest awhile before I sent it  
LeGrand

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16 June 2003

Ashley,

Thank you for having lunch with me today. On the way home I thought a lot about what you said, and in that context tried to analyze what I felt about the nature of one's relationships with other people. One of the great blessings of my life is that it is full of people whom I dearly love – my family and many friends. Some of those associations are short-lived, and others have survived the years. The time-span is only partly related to the quality of my feelings, which cover a broad spectrum affections – the full spectrum I call “love” – but the feelings themselves are markedly different for different people. As I drove home, I wondered what those differences are. I decided that my fondness falls into two general categories, but the categories seem to blur at the place where they come together: One, by far the most common, is a kind of focusing on another individual, being more or less concerned about his or her welfare, and rejoicing to a greater or lesser extent in his or her presence. The intensity of those feelings vary a great deal. As J. Golden Kimball so rightly observed: “The Lord said we should love everyone, and I do: but I love some a damn sight more than I love others.”

The other kind of love is different from that: It is much more rare and therefore more difficult to capture, define, and encapsulate in a few words. Consequently, until now, I had not considered it seriously enough to give it a separate identity and name, but it is expressed to me in the feelings I was trying to analyze as I drove home today. You called it to my attention when you projected one's ability to love into our most distant past – well before “the beginning.” My trying to identify that kind of love – I suspect its name is “charity” – is the subject of this note.

As I thought, I realized that if I were going to analyze that unique feeling, I would have to begin by isolating it from other similar feelings. And the best way to do that would be to identify the persons who evoked such feelings. So the first question that had to be answered was: Who else, besides Ashley, do I feel that way toward. I went through a long list of friends and used very carefully chosen criteria: the answer surprised me because the final list is very short: the Saviour, of course; some members of my family; the Prophet Joseph; David King; Olig Penkovskey; and Sigmond Mowinckel. That's a remarkable list because many of the people on it are not my this-world contemporaries. They not only no longer live in this world, but when they were here, some of them lived on a different side of the earth from me. The most obvious things they have in common is that the feeling of comradery I have when I consider the Council, I also have for them individually. As I mentioned above, the line is quickly blurred between these and other people. That is so because other people (George Washington, Orson Pratt, members of family, and some friends who are still very much a part of this world) probably ought to be on that short list also, but I deliberately made it a “for sure” list, rather than a “probably” list because the conditions of thee primary question would be easier to analyze if I could find fewer, but more

precise, examples.

You recall during our conversation at lunch, when we projected the beginnings of one's "sociality" (as in D&C 130) to long before the Council, and you suggested that such friendships must be as eternal in their continuance as intelligences are eternal in their being. I observed that when I projected the reality of friendship back that far beyond time it stirred in me feelings I didn't quite understand. Then I tried to explain that, by saying that when I think/feel about the Council, I feel there must have been an extraordinary closeness among its members – friendship actualized as pure charity – and that what you had just drawn on that paper pushed those same feelings back for me to the origins suggested by our pencil sketch. To me that concept – as you said it and as I understood it – was by far the most important idea to come out of our conversation, and one of the most important ideas I have had for a very long time.

So as I drove home today I tried to fit what we had discussed into the context of what else I had already known. I recalled the Saviour's statement "love thy neighbor as thyself," and for the first time I wondered what that really means. Before today I had understood it to mean that one should love others the way one loves oneself, and that one should demonstrate that love in the same way one would demonstrate one's love for one's Self: that is, by being alert to their needs, looking out for their safety, seeking to make them happy; and when one makes a decision that would impact their lives, make that decision according to their best interests.

As I thought about it, I concluded that the definition I had just drawn was of what I earlier described as focused love, but it does not describe this new, integral feeling I was trying to identify. After some thought, I came to an understanding that is compatible with the feeling, so I now take it that the "as yourself" is quite literal: it does not mean "like yourself" it means "as one's Self." It is a concept that approaches the same idea as the word "comprehend" in John 1, or perhaps more closely to Lehi's "encircled eternally."

When this concept first occurred to me, I was hesitant to accept it because it seemed to me that the only way it would be possible to love another as though he were one's Self would be if one could somehow obliterate the distinction between Self and non-self. That distinction is as eternal as we are, so a definition cannot presuppose such an obliteration. So I had to think further. I concluded that I was correct in the original idea, except that it could not mean to blur the personality differences of individuals, or to cloud one's sense of Self as is proposed in the notion of a universal Nirvana. Rather, it must mean to experience a sense of completeness in one's Self by being in the other person's presence so that one is more completely one's personal Self when he finds "sociality" with another. That idea was appealing, but it would require a good deal of exploration before it would make much sense.

The words both convey and distort the idea I was trying to grasp. They conveyed the correct idea because they suggested a oneness *in fact*, rather than a focused love; but at the same time, and for the same reason, they distorted the idea because they suggest a oneness *in fact* rather than only an embrace. To make sense of it all, I had to discover how both ideas could be true, and retain the necessary individuality that would also make both ideas false. I had grasped the correct notion during our conversation, but now I had to solidify it in my own thinking.

No idea is born in a vacuum. There always ideas that surround it, and that must be accommodated if a new truth is to be identified as truth. For me, one such idea is this: I believe the priesthood is the legitimizing sealing mechanism, but not the sealing power. In other words, the priesthood ordinances are necessary, but not sufficient to achieve an eternal bonding. Rather, I believe that charity – the pure love of Christ – is the actual sealing power that, after the sealing ordinances of the priesthood, is sufficient to achieve an eternal bonding. Any new understanding of love I was to come up with had to conform to that notion.

Now the explanation – it begins with the mutually contradictory premises I mentioned above:

The love that seals souls together is an embrace of persons, and a combining of their souls into one (those ideas are deliberately expressed as apparently mutually contradictory concepts). I am using “soul” in a way that I think is consistent with the scriptures – that is, an embodied intelligence, whether that body be spirit, earthly, or resurrected.

Now let me try to wiggle out of the contradictions I have imposed upon my definition. (It will not be hard, because these ideas are as much yours as they are mine.) A “person” consists of many different “parts,” (“Parts” is an inadequate word. I tried “elements” and “stuff” but neither worked any better. So “parts” will have to do, but even so, its meaning here will only be relevant within the terms and in the context I use it here), and that some of those parts can be united with similar parts of other persons in a perfect unity, but that at least one part of each individual must, by definition, remain in tact and separate, in order for the individual to remain an individual, and therefore that part cannot be united with any other person. (There is one major exception, of course. I do not understand it beyond simply knowing it is there: and that is the fact that we are made by, through, and *of* the Saviour’s light. These ideas seem to be related to that relationship, but that is a unique relationship between each of us and the Saviour, and that uniqueness puts that relationship on a completely different scale from the others I am talking about.)

Much of what I am about to write will be “old hat” to you, but a review of these ideas was a necessary part of my thinking process, so I will also review them here. One always has to build from the foundation up, so b ack to the basics we go!

As we have discussed, a fully developed person consists of the following parts – and one generates, receives, and/or assimilates those parts in the following order:

- 1) At the beginning of cognizance a “person” (called Truth) is a recipient and user of truth – truth is knowledge of eternal reality.
- 2) A Truth assimilates truth, and thereby emits light ( “which truth shineth.”). Thus an individual, in his earliest development, consists of the core person and an aura of light. A person with such an aura of light is called an intelligence – intelligence is “the light of truth” The light can grow to be very great, but I have not sufficient information to know in what way the core individual also grows. The only example I know is the Saviour. In his case, on this earth, his person was able to be housed in a body like ours, but his light extended throughout the entire

realm of pre-earth spiritual universe and whatever preceded it, the physical universe, and it continues on to encompass all the degrees of resurrected glory – sufficient for us to come home to the Celestial world. He is different from us, but even so, the example suggests to me that the “size” of the deity who is now housed in the Saviour’s resurrected body is substantially different from the size of the light which shines from his eternal person. – But I can’t conceptualize what I just wrote, and suppose it will be a very long time before I understand it. (The author of the Hymn of the Pearl seems to suggest the same notion, but he doesn’t try to be explicit.)

3) an Intelligence (the core person plus his aura) receives, as a gift from the Saviour, a different kind of light – that light is formulated into the spirit matter that makes up his spirit body. He is now a “Spirit” – that is, an intelligence housed in a spirit body – which body is made of spirit matter – which matter is made “of” the Saviour’s light, rather than of the light of the aura which the person generated himself. That is significant because it implies a different relationship with the Saviour than our first one. (It also causes me to wonder at the use of the word “soul” in the concluding story of Abraham 3.)

4) a human – earthling – is a spirit person who has been given – again, as a gift from the Saviour, but through this world’s physical processes – a mortal body made of physical materials derived from the elements of the world we live on – and also made “of” the Saviour’s light. These physical materials are apparently of a greater variety than the materials that make up our spirit bodies. I gather that, because they include the coarse stuff we can see and feel (the matter the Prophet Joseph described as being less “refined” than the matter our spirit bodies are made of.) However that is not all – these physical bodies apparently also contain elements of substantial power – that is Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telesstial matter (see D&C 88:25-32). That idea is substantiated by the facts that the earth itself will become a celestial orb, and that the Saviour’s celestial resurrected body was made of materials gathered from our beautiful world.

5) After one leaves this world through death, one becomes a “post-mortal” spirit person – but I don’t know what kind of “spirit body” he has. It may be that it is the same as the pre-mortal spirit body. But in that case it seems one would just have to wait until the resurrection to have whatever advantages one might get from having once had a physical body. Or it may be that when a person dies, his spirit takes something of the elements of this body along with him into the post-mortal spirit world. If that is so, perhaps one of the major steps in our individual evolutionary process is to come here so we can pick up that additional stuff so we can take it with us into the post-mortal spirit world. If that is so, then a baby who is only on this earth for an hour or so, and then dies, might leave here with that “something” which enhances one’s spirit body so that one can do things and learn things in the post-mortal spirit world that one could not have done or learned in a pre-mortal spirit body. If that is true, then the post-mortal spirit world has an experiential value that the pre-mortal spirit world could not have – and the way one responds to those new experiences apparently have as great an effect upon one’s eternal salvation as the way one handles such experiences in this mortal world. If that is so, persons who die in any state of un-accountability – whether one is younger than eight years, or a mature person who never had the law – such a person will be able to do things and experience things – and respond to those things – in the post-mortal spirit world, in much the same way as he would have done on

this earth if he had lived a hundred years with a knowledge of the gospel.

5) An intelligence with a resurrected body. The resurrection is apparently both a sealing together and an enhancement of all of the qualities or elements of light mentioned above. So a resurrected person is an intelligence who has acquired a spirit body made of the Saviour's light, a physical body also made of that light, perhaps an enhanced post mortal spirit body with additional material made of the Saviour's light, and now, through the resurrection, has a fully developed body of pure light – and also has a substantially enhanced aura of light.

I presume as a Truth passes through each of the experiences prerequisite to achieving that end, he/she encounters different tensions through different kinds of experiences, and that the way one deals with them further defines one's nature, personality, ability to love, and the quality (interesting idea, but I'm not at all sure how to define the word) of the light he emits – is appears to be the combination of those lights which makes up his final (?) aura. I assume that with one's accumulation of both a variety of lights and truth ("truth" here means correct information rather than the personified Truth), one's aura would grow and shine according to the way one handled each of those tensions and experiences.

Now, after all that big, long and drawn out introduction, let me tell you what I remember we concluded about the nature of that second kind of love.

As two persons came together their bodies (whether it be spirit body, earthly, or resurrected) are capable of colliding or of touching each other, but they are not capable of occupying the same space at the same time. However, I assume that the aura around each of those bodies would be capable of interacting or interlacing, rather than colliding, and therefore would be able to occupy the same space at the same time. Thus the auras of each would become a oneness – each enhanced by the other – without compromising the unique qualities and personalities of the individuals who produced those auras.

In this way two such persons could become one – not in unity and purpose, but in actual fact – merging light to light (adding grace to grace) in perfect love (loving another *as* one's Self) without in any way compromising either the individuality or the unique personality of one's core Self.

If this is correct, then the bonding which we call "sealing" in the Celestial glory would be an absolute unity – a oneness – perfect love – but not a merging of unique personalities into a single personality, or of an individual person into a universal person – but a fulfillment wherein each participating individual is more fully onself because he could not be complete without partaking of the glory of the other persons whom he loves.

If that made sense, my earlier deliberately contradictory statement that "The love that seals souls together is an embrace of persons, and a combining of their souls" ought to make sense also.

What I have described is what I believe to be the quality of love that existed in the Council and before, and the same quality of love that will exist in the celestial world. It seems to me that the

Abraham 3 discussion of the differences in the greatness of the intelligences is not only about the extent of their light, but it is also about the power of their love to reach out to others. If Truth can know truth, and that truth shines, then it seems to me that the truth it knows about others ought to be part of what shines – but that the extent to which it shines is determined by whether its primary focus is outward or inward – if inward, then ultimately it becomes a black hole. If outward, then the radius of one’s light defines the extent to which one may be sealed to others.

But that is not all.

It seems to me that if that is true of our interactions with others before and after this life, then it must also be true that during this life, to some lesser degree, that same kind of love can exist among people in this world. (H. C. Kimball’s talk on the disk I gave you is an example.) If that is so, then the love which is the ultimate sealing power (both in this world and in every other) is a “oneness” with, rather than a focused attention toward one’s beloved, is an eternal embrace.

Notwithstanding what I have written, my own experiences teaches me that what I have called “focused love” is very important and very valuable. It is the necessary beginnings of directing one’s attentions outward rather than inward, and is probably the source of almost all of the good that happens, not only to and by me personally, but also to and by everyone else in the world as well. For me it is, and I suppose has always been, my primary source of happiness and fulfillment. In the course of my life I have known hundreds of people whom I love – some I have known for only a short time, others are long-term friendships, but the love seems equally real. Still, as I mentioned, the list of people who give me a sense of completeness is very short. So as I write this, I sit here, wondering what am I going to do – what must I become – to expand my soul so that it may embrace “many, yea, very many” others ???

Thank you for being my friend.  
LeGrand

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#### **Email conversation with Ashley**

>>> "LeGrand Baker" <legrand\_baker@byu.edu> 07/14/03 08:13AM >>>

I taught High Priests yesterday. Have you read lesson 13 on the priesthood? Twice President Taylor defines priesthood in terms of "intelligences." The first 3 or 4 pages of that lesson was the most stimulating reading I have done for a long time.

See you tomorrow

LeGrand

-----Original Message-----

From: Ash Buchanan [<mailto:abuchanan@jacobsenconstruction.com>]

Sent: Monday, July 14, 2003 8:19 AM

To: LeGrand Baker

Subject: Re: wow

I did notice that yesterday in priesthood, but I passed it up because I assumed it was simple verbage for "spirit" because didn't they do that occasionally?. I guess I made a major blunder on that one, I'll go back and really read it this time. See you tommorrow, ash

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Ashley,

I suspect most people read it your way. I wondered how it ever got printed in there in the first place, but I guess you answered my question. Either the editors didn't know what President Taylor was saying, or else they assumed almost no one else would know. However, John Taylor lived during and after Orson Pratt wrote his Great First Cause, and died only a few years before BH Roberts wrote his 70's lessons which were approved by the First Presidency. In John Taylor's day people were actually talking about who and what intelligences were. Its interesting, isn't it, theology, like everything else, is primarily a question of language. It doesn't matter what John Taylor wrote, it only matters how modern readers understand his words. (The paragraph quoted below is one of the two paragraphs where he mentions intelligences.) Its that way with the scriptures as well. I have come to wonder if the scriptures actually do have a sub-text, or if they only have the language of the prophets, and there is no surface text with a second text -- a sub-text -- embedded in their words, and hidden behind the surface. But rather, I suspect, the original intended text is what we consider the sub-text,

and the second text (the surface text) is an overlay that the readers put there. That is, we read the words with the definitions our culture has taught us -- or we don't really bother to read them at all because they don't really have definitions one can get a firm hold on -- which often means they have no definition at all, such as "faith," "redeem" "calling and election," and other words and phrases that we use with little or no real care. "Truth" is another. Did you notice that President Taylor said about truth. I don't suppose that you and I are the first or only ones to figure out what that word means. Yet, if you read the part of the sentence I have typed in all caps, the only way it makes sense is the way you and I understand it. Here is another example where there is no sub-text, only the words spoken by the prophet, and one either reads the words the way he meant them, or one reads them some other way

"Priesthood is the power of God."

"What is priesthood?. . . I shall briefly answer that it is the government of God, whether on the earth or in the heavens, for it is by that power, agency or principle that all things are governed on the earth and in the heavens, and by that power that all things are upheld and sustained. It governs all things-it directs all things-it sustains all things- AND HAS TO DO WITH ALL THINGS THAT GOD AND TRUTH ARE ASSOCIATED WITH. [Note: if truth is an abstract, it cannot "associate" with anything. The next thing President Taylor says is: ] It is the power of God delegated to intelligences in the heavens and to men on the earth; and when we arrive in the celestial kingdom of God, we shall find the most perfect order and harmony existing, because there is the perfect pattern, the most perfect order of government carried out, and when or wherever those principles have been developed in the earth, in proportion as they have spread and been acted upon, just in that proportion have they produced blessings and salvation to the human family And when the government of God shall be more extensively adopted, and when Jesus' prayer, that he taught his disciples, is answered, and God's kingdom comes on the earth, and his will is done here as in heaven (see Matthew 6:10), then, and not till then, will universal love, peace, harmony and union prevail." (Teachings of John Taylor, p. 119)



Love you  
LeGrand