

LIGHT REFLECTIONS

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All and Each

When I was a lad, my parents had neighboring offices in the Talmage Building. Sometimes I waited inside those offices while Mom and Dad attended meetings or ran campus errands. I was never tempted to crack any of their tomes on probability theory (to say nothing of Bayesian modeling¹). But I carefully studied the pictures on the shelves and the quotations on the walls. I still remember by heart two quotes that my dad affixed to his pin board.

The first, not very cheering, was from Schiller: “Against stupidity the gods themselves contend in vain.”

The second, from C.S. Lewis’s science fiction novel *Perelandra*, stirred me to the quick: “In His city, all things are made for each. When He died in the wounded world, He died not for men, but for each man. Had any man been the only man made, He would have done no less.” Even my callow teenaged heart knew at once these words were true.

In later years, I found Lewis’s witness affirmed in my favorite chapter of the Book of Mormon. In his climactic sermon on faith, hope, and charity, Mormon attests that Christ will continue His redeeming work “so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one [soul] upon the face thereof to be saved” (Moro. 7:36). Our Savior does all things—and in His city all things are made—for each.

Similar truths reverberated in this month’s general conference. “I bear witness of this truth,” said Elder Gérald Caussé: “God and His Son, Jesus Christ, love *all*—and They love *each*.”² Elder Caussé implored us all to do likewise—to “follow the Lord’s perfect example and learn to love *all* and to love *each*, just as He does.”³

Elder Dale G. Renlund taught a related truth with the Euclidian logic of redeeming love. “‘All mankind may be saved,’” he said, “because of [Jesus Christ] and His atoning sacrifice. *All* means *everyone*. If everyone, then anyone. If anyone, then even one. And if even one, then even you.”⁴ There is no all without each.

Fusing the claims of *all* and *each* is one of the great challenges of any university and especially of BYU. We craft policies and present lessons that should apply to *all*. But we fail in our mission if we forget about *each*. The very first sentence of our mission statement charges us to “assist *individuals*.”⁵ We strive to be good stewards of resources that must serve all. But the essence of our work is a ministry to each.

Earlier this year, one of my closest friends on campus lost his father-in-law to cancer. To show support for this friend and his wife, Lia and I quietly attended the funeral.

¹ See, e.g., Hamada, Wilson, REESE, & Martz, *Bayesian Reliability* (2008).

² Gérald Caussé, “Love All; Love Each,” *Liahona*, May 2026.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Dale G. Renlund, “Because of Jesus Christ,” *Liahona*, May 2026.

⁵ “The Mission of Brigham Young University” (emphasis added).

It was a beautiful tribute to a very good man—one who found the restored gospel of Jesus Christ as a teenager and was transformed by it forever. As I listened to the eulogies and the testimonies, I was deeply touched by the goodness of a man I had never met. I was also impressed by the unspeakable sacredness of the life of a single Saint. So much love is poured into each life. So much grace flows from it.

I think of another beloved C.S. Lewis quote, this one from “The Weight of Glory”: “It is a serious thing,” Lewis said, “to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses . . . There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit.”⁶ Brigham Young taught something similar with his indelible concision: “The least, the most inferior spirit now upon the earth . . . is worth worlds.”⁷

Ours is a campus filled with dear friends, incomparable students, and “splendid strangers.”⁸ Each is a possible god or goddess. Each is worth worlds. That being so, “certainly all relationships within the BYU community should reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor.”⁹ And surely we should “think of [one another] as brothers and sisters seeking together to master the academic disciplines while remaining mastered by the higher claims of discipleship to the Savior.”¹⁰

In this season of Convocation and Commencement, may we love and celebrate all of our graduates—and we love and celebrate each.

There is no all without each, and no BYU without both.

⁶ C.S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory,” Sermon preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on June 8, 1942.

⁷ Brigham Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, Mar. 6, 1861, 2, quoted in Joy D. Jones, “Value Beyond Measure,” *Ensign*, October 2017.

⁸ G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (1908).

⁹ “The Mission of Brigham Young University.”

¹⁰ “The Aims of a BYU Education.”