THE CONSOLATION

AN INTERPRETIVE VARIATION ON THE LAST GENERAL CONFERENCE SERMON OF JOSEPH SMITH

By Lincoln Cannon

On 7 April 1844, less than three months before his assassination, Joseph Smith spoke to thousands of fellow Mormons gathered in Nauvoo, Illinois, for a general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Responding to the accidental death of city constable King Follett, Joseph addressed the subjects of resurrection and deification, in what many Mormons esteem as his culminating theological statement and literary critic Harold Bloom has assessed as "one of the truly remarkable sermons ever preached in America".[1] As a tribute to and in reverence of Joseph's words, I share this interpretive variation.[2]

Friends, I'll call the attention of this group while I address you on the subject of our dead. The anniversary of the death of my father, Layne Cannon, who was consumed by cancer some years ago, has led me to this subject. Since most, if not all in this group, have also lost family or friends, I feel to speak on the subject of our dead in general, according to whatever wisdom and inspiration I might have, and offer you my ideas for consolation.

I ask for your hope and trust that I may set forth truth, particularly of the sort that carries conviction to hearts and minds of its trustworthiness: truth of the sort we should create to the extent we don't discover it, so that even if you happen to think it's not true yet, you'll forgive me for thinking it is, and join me in the work to make it so.[3] For many years, the howling wind of science has been blowing superstition and barbarism from humanity.[4] We need the fresh air, but you won't hear through the noise or see through the dust, unless you trust, at least enough to look and listen. Relax preconceptions and skepticism, and let hope inspire a strenuous mood. That is powerful and effective prayer. There's strength here, and I'm confident our prayer will matter.

Before I enter fully into the subject of our dead, I wish to pave the way with a few preliminaries. I wish to go back to when Gods without beginning find themselves making worlds without end.[5] There's our starting

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[1] Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Random House, 2005) 533

[2] Thanks to Brad Carmack, Bryant Smith, Carl Youngblood, Joseph West, Leonard Reil and Sean Lindsay for their encouragement, editing, and critical feedback.

[3] D&C 58: 26-29

[4] William James, *The will to believe, and other essays in popular philosophy, and Human immortality* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960) x

[5] William Phelps, "If You Could Hie to Kolob", *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake

point. To understand the subject of our dead, we must start with an understanding of God. If we start in the right direction, it's easier to stay on course; but if we start in the wrong direction, we'll be off course, and it may be hard to correct.

Few understand well the nature of God. Few understand our past and future relation to God, so most humans know little more than other animals – little more than to eat, drink and sleep. Most animals know nothing about God, yet they know as much as we, except to the extent we comprehend God. If we don't comprehend God, we don't comprehend ourselves. I want to go back to when Gods without beginning find themselves making worlds without end, and so lift our minds to a more exalted understanding than what we generally aspire to.

I want to ask this group, each of you, to answer this question in your own heart: what kind of being is God? Ask yourself. Turn your thoughts inward, and ask yourself if you've seen, heard, or communed with God. Go further than dogmas and creeds. They may express some truth, but they're fundamentally wrong: abominations and corruptions called "God", but without the power of God,[6] they set up stakes and say, "Come this far and no further."[7] We must go further! I repeat the question: what kind of being is God? Do you know? Have you seen, heard, or communed with God? I intend to make this question keep you up at night.

Our first goal is an understanding of God. If any of us is fortunate enough to know something about God, and can share that knowledge such that its sublime esthetic seals itself in each other's heart, then we should never again ridicule prophecy. But if we fail, we should renounce any pretension to inspiration or inheritance of revelation, and welcome each other as reformed sinners or crackpots: greeted as friends, no longer offenders of the religious nor fools to the irreligious.[8] In any case, everyone should have the right to be a false prophet, or a true one. As Moses says in the Bible, "I wish that all were prophets!"[9] In that spirit, let's enquire to know something about God, and if we succeed then we'll also know prophecy.[10]

Let's go back to when Gods without beginning find themselves making worlds without end, to understand the kind of being God is. What sort of being was God? I wish the world could hear it. I'm going to tell you what God plans for humanity and why. God was once as we are now, and is a posthuman![11] That's the great secret. If time and space were opened to reveal the God whose power made our world and innumerable others,[12] if we were to see God here and now, we would see posthumanity: the evolutionary future of our bodies, relations and world, only as different from us as we now are from our evolutionary past. Prehumanity evolved predictably along the contours of its world, humanity recursively projected itself to fill that world as "God", and posthumanity realized those projections. Gods made worlds in their own

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City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998) 284

[6] Joseph Smith History 1: 19

[7] Joseph Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938) 327

[8] 1 Corinthians 1: 23

[9] Numbers 11: 29

[10] Revelation 19: 10

[11] Nick Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity", *Bioethics* 19 (2005) 3:202

[12] Moses 1: 33

image, watched those things they'd ordered until they obeyed,[13] and so made other beings of knowledge and power.[14]

In order to understand the subject of our dead, for consolation of those who mourn the loss of friends, we must understand how God came to be. I'm going to tell you how God came to be God. Some imagine and suppose that God was God forever. I reject that idea, and so should you. God was once like us. Yes! God, our creator, lived in a world like ours. These are challenging ideas for some, but they're simple.

The first principle of consolation is trust in God, and not just any god, but rather a God that was once like us.[15] That's Jesus' good news, and I wish I could tell it to the fundamentalists like an archangel from the Apocalypse, so their dogmatizing would cease forever. What does Jesus say? "The Son can do only what he sees his Father doing. As the Father has life in himself, so he's granted the Son to have life in himself." [16] What does Jesus do? He lays down his life, and takes it up again: only what he sees his Father doing. Do the fundamentalists believe it? If they don't then they don't believe the Bible.

Now this is eternal life: to know the only true God,[17] that we're in this God,[18] and that we've got to learn how to be Gods ourselves, the same as all Gods have done before us, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one, from compassion to compassion, from creation to creation, until remembering our dead becomes their resurrection, and we are able to live in everlasting love and light, as do those who live in everlasting knowledge and power. And in these times of accelerating change,[19] we should take this more seriously.

These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to mourners, when they must part with friends, to know that, although their bodies go down and dissolve, they'll rise again to live in everlasting love and light, beyond present notions of suffering and death. As the Bible says, they'll join us as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.[20] What's that? To gain the same love, the same light, and the same knowledge and power, until we become Gods, the same as those who've gone before, not merely as their prosthetics, but rather as their equals and genuinely compassionate creators in ourselves.[21]

The Bible tells of two aspiring Gods. One opposes and exalts itself over everything that's called God or worshiped, proclaiming itself God.[22] The other, although in very nature a God, doesn't consider equality

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[13] Abraham 4: 18
[14] D&C 77: 2-4
[15] Articles of Faith 1: 4
[16] John 5: 26
[17] John 17: 3
[18] 1 John 5: 20-21
[19] Ray Kurzweil, "The Law of Accelerating Returns", *Kurzweil Accelerating Intelligence*, 7 March 2001, accessed 20 December 2011, http://www.kurzweilai.net/the-law-of-accelerating-returns
[20] Romans 8: 17
[21] D&C 88: 107 and D&C 76: 95
[22] 2 Thessalonians 2: 4

with God something to be used to its own advantage.[23] What does Jesus say? He says to his Father, "I've brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence."[24] He also says to his Father, "I've given others the glory you gave me, that they may be one as we are one."[25] And he says to his disciples, "I'll do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I'll do it. If you love me, keep my commands."[26] So Jesus shows us and invites us to be the God that's glorified in all, both seeking and sharing,[27] liberal to those who ask and terrible to those who oppress.[28]

Love posthumanity with all your heart and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment, and the second is like it: love humanity as yourself, not as being human, but rather as becoming posthuman.[29] Higher than love of humanity is love of the furthest and future ones. Higher still than love of friends is love of their overflowing hearts, their creations beyond themselves, and the posthumanity in them.[30] Trust in and change toward posthumanity: these are the first principles of consolation, or the Gospel of Christ about which so much has been said.[31] When we choose Christ, we choose to change.[32]

When we climb up a ladder, we must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until we arrive at the top; and so it is with these principles. We must begin with the first and go on until we learn all the principles of exaltation, but it'll be a long time after our bodies and world change, transfigured or resurrected beyond present notions of death, before we learn them. For now, we don't even have the anatomic or environmental capacity to comprehend them all.[33] Indeed, we should never suppose we've learned them all. The hypothesis undermines itself, and the very idea of a point in our progression where we couldn't proceed any further throws a gloom over every intelligent and reflecting mind. God must progress in knowledge and power, worlds without end, and so must we.[34] Yet whatever degree of intelligence we attain now should remain with us in the transfiguration or resurrection, so that if we diligently gain more knowledge now, we'll have an advantage in the future.[35]

I suppose I shouldn't speculate excessively beyond what experience and logic warrant. If I do, the skeptics will ridicule me. So I'll go to old-fashioned logic for a while. I'll comment on the arguments of philosophers. I want to analyze them.

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[23] Philippians 2: 6
[24] John 17: 4-5
[25] John 17: 22
[26] John 14: 13-15
[27] Smith in *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984) 252
[28] Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 257
[29] Matthew 22: 37-39
[30] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Dover Publications, 1999) 56-57
[31] Articles of Faith 1: 4
[32] Ezra Benson, "Born of God", *Ensign* (July 1989)
[33] Moses 1: 11
[34] Wilford Woodruff in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855-86) 6: 120
[35] D&C 130: 18-19

As philosophers put it, if we don't go extinct before becoming posthumans, and if as posthumans we'll make many worlds like those of our evolutionary ancestors, then posthumans made our world – it's probable approaching certainty.[36] So belief we'll one day become creative posthumans is false, for all practical purposes, unless posthumans made our world. If you disagree, you disagree with logic. Logicians can do no more than I'm telling you. I want the atheists that ridicule religion to understand. Some suppose technology is likely to make us the first Gods, but they're wrong. We almost certainly will not be the only or first to make worlds like those in our past. I also want the fundamentalists that ridicule science to understand. Supposed first causes, assumed irreducible complexities, and other gaps in our understanding of creation don't in themselves merit our reverence. Trust in God is not obligated by an imagined past, but rather by our desired future.

Of course, skeptics think it treasonous to trust in anything not warranted by experience and logic. Yet how can we escape extinction, except God be with us? Reason binds us. As we look at our world, everywhere we see life, from the hardy microbe to the human. As we look at the heavens, everywhere we see homes for life, but there's something we don't see. Where are the posthumans? So we listen, but a great silence tempts us to despair.[37] In the vastness of space and time, it's as if some great filter is narrowing the abundance of simple life to a scarcity of complex life.[38] Are we destined for extinction? That's the observation warranted by experience, and that's the conclusion warranted by logic, unless posthumanity already exists. I'm grateful for logic, but I'm also grateful for that sublime esthetic in our hearts, which encourages our will to posthumanity. Skeptics, reason with me. If God does not exist, we will not become God.[39]

Without beginning, Gods find themselves making worlds without end. When we start this way, we start to learn about the living God, transcendent and immanent, what we should worship, and how we should worship.[40] Like the ancient prophets, whose minds were so pointed by the sublime esthetic, we approach God seeking knowledge,[41] and we ask so as to receive answers through our actions.[42] The heavens unfold to us, and nothing is withheld. If there are bounds to the worlds, we'll discover and create them. Whether there be one God or many Gods, we'll discover and create them.[43] When we are ready to come to God, God is ready to come to us.

Now, why do the fundamentalists say that God created the world out of nothing? The reasons are creeds and dogmas, which make it blasphemy to contradict their idea. If we tell them God made the world out of

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[36] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" *Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (2003) 211: 243-255

[37] David Brin, "The Great Silence: The Controversy Concerning Extraterrestrial Intelligent Life", *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* (1983) 24: 283-309

[38] Robin Hanson, "The Great Filter: Are We Almost Past It?" *George Mason University*, 15 September 1998, accessed 4 January 2012, http://hanson.gmu.edu/greatfilter.html

[39] Lincoln Cannon, "Theological Implications of the New God Argument", *Parallels and Convergences: Mormon Thought and Engineering Vision* (Draper, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2012)

[40] D&C 93: 19

[41] D&C 121: 27

[42] Matthew 7: 21

[43] D&C 121: 28-31

something, they'll call us fools. But we've learned and know more, and the sublime esthetic in us would do more, so let's associate ourselves with that. You ask the fundamentalists why they say the world was made out of nothing, and they'll answer, "Doesn't the Bible say God created the world?" And they infer, from the word "create", that it must have been made out of nothing. Now, the word "create" came from a Hebrew word that does not mean "to create out of nothing". Rather, it means something like "organize", as we would organize materials to make a ship. Hence, the Bible suggests God had materials to organize the world out of chaos. Matter and energy existed from the time God existed, and can never be annihilated. They can be organized and reorganized, but not annihilated. Matter and energy had no beginning and can have no end.

That leads us to another subject that's calculated to exalt humanity. It's associated with the subject of our dead. The soul, the spirit, or the mind: where did it come from? Most theologians say that God created it from nothing, but it's not so. That idea lessens humanity. We shouldn't believe it because we know better. I'm going to tell of things more noble.

We say God has always existed in some way or another. It's a good idea, but why don't we say humanity has always existed in the same way? We should. God made our bodies and world from matter and energy, within which our minds and relations, and the information of which they consist, persisted and emerged. As matter is eternal, so information was not created from nothing, neither indeed can be.[44] It can be organized and reorganized, diffused toward impotence or focused toward empowerment, but not created from nothing or annihilated. Matter and information are inseparably connected,[45] otherwise there could be no sense nor insensibility, neither purpose in creation. Indeed, without both things to act and to be acted on, there could be no creation, and all would vanish away.[46] How does it read in the Bible? It doesn't say God created the human mind. It says, "God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."[47]

The intelligence, or the information of which the human mind consists, is co-eternal with God. We might say we don't remember eternity, but we do, and it remembers us. We are the memory of eternity, cascading through space and time as cause and effect, moving and monitoring, forming and feeling,[48] growing and reflecting.[49] We remember eternity in the only way we can, according to capacity, as that which experiences information from the inside;[50] and eternity remembers us even as our capacity changes from life to death. Cause and effect don't end. Information persists. So when we mourn, what have we lost? Our friends are only without their bodies for a short season. Their minds have faded only for a little moment, as it were. Yet they still exist in a place where they interrelate like us. They're not far from us,

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[44] D&C 93: 29

[45] D&C 93: 33

[46] 2 Nephi 2: 11-13

[47] Genesis 2: 7

[48] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003) 109-111

[49] Douglas Hofstadter, *I Am a Strange Loop* (New York: Basic Books, 2008) 187

[50] David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (Oxford: University Press, 1996) 305

our thoughts, feelings and emotions.[51] Indeed, all who have bodies have power over those who haven't.[52] We're inhabited by them.[53] They're right here.[54] Remember our dead.

This is the immortality of the human mind. Is it logical to say that information is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? Information had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That's good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there wasn't information. It's co-eternal with God.

Take your ring from your finger and compare it to the human mind, the immortal part that has no beginning. Suppose you cut it in two, then it has a beginning and an end; but join it again, and it continues one eternal round. The human mind is the same. If it had a beginning, it'll have an end. All the theologians throughout history, who say that the human mind had a beginning, prove that it must have an end; and if that's true then we'll be annihilated. But if I'm right, we might with boldness proclaim from the housetops that God never had the power to create the human mind from nothing. God could not create God from nothing. Information is eternal and has always existed. There's no creation about it, though all information is susceptible to change.

Without beginning, Gods find themselves in the midst of information and matter; and, because they're more intelligent, they make worlds without end, establishing laws whereby the rest have an opportunity to advance like themselves. We're independent in the situation in which Gods place us, to act for ourselves and to advance in knowledge.[55] Gods have power to institute rules to instruct weaker intelligences according to their circumstances,[56] and they maintain that power without compulsion,[57] that all may be exalted together, so that all might have compassion on compassion, creation on creation, all the knowledge and power, and the degree of intelligence that's required to preserve identity for all time and throughout all eternity.[58]

These are good principles. They taste good. I can taste the principles of life, and so can you. They're shared with us as prophecy, and I know that when I share these principles with you as they were shared with me, you taste them. Trust them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. We can also taste the principles of life. We know they're good, and when we share these principles by inspiration of the sublime esthetic, we're bound to taste them as sweet and enjoy.

In life, we experience everything precisely as though bodies are constructs of minds,[59] and anything we

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[51] Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 326
[52] Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 181
[53] Hofstadter, *I Am a Strange Loop* 248
[54] Brigham Young in *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1925) 577
[55] D&C 93: 30-32
[56] Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 255
[57] D&C 121: 34-46
[58] Young in *Journal of Discourses* 6: 333
[59] George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (Rockville, Maryland: Arc Manor, 2008) 31-32

learn that will preserve our minds will also preserve our bodies. Of course, "prepare to die" is not the exhortation here, but "prepare to live" is the word with us. So we seek to extend present life to the uttermost, by balancing work and rest, by applying every health and medical science, and so prepare for a better life.[60] We'll not all die, but we'll all change.[61] In the day of transfiguration, our bodies and world must change.[62] In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. Then the prophecy will be true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."[63] Yet we have a responsibility, an awful responsibility, in relation to our dead. What of all who didn't learn to preserve their minds? Can we do nothing for our friends who died? Can they be saved, though their bodies are decaying in the grave?

What are the prophecies in relation to the subject of our dead? The Bible says, "since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."[64] Some imagine and suppose that Jesus would do all the work, but Jesus rejects that idea, and so should we. Adam is many,[65] all humanity, and all humanity should be Christ:[66] the church of the firstborn,[67] begotten children of God,[68] even literal saviors.[69] We should take on the identity of Christ in as many ways as possible,[70] even laboring to the point of suffering for each other.[71] As Jesus invites us to help fulfill prophecy that everyone will hear his gospel and receive consolation,[72] so he invites us to help fulfill prophecy that everyone will receive healing.[73] What does Jesus say? "Whoever believes in me will do the works I've been doing, and they'll do even greater things than these."[74] What does Jesus do? He resurrects the dead.

Our greatest responsibility in this world is to resurrect our dead, and we begin by remembering them. Consider that John the Revelator was contemplating this subject when he "saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."[75] The book of life is the record of eternity, and the other books are our records, history and genealogy. Notice that the dead are judged according to their works as written in the other books: whatever we do record is recorded in

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[60] Young in *Journal of Discourses* 11: 132
[61] 1 Corinthians 15: 51
[62] D&C 63: 20-21
[63] 1 Corinthians 15: 52-54
[64] 1 Corinthians 15: 21-22
[65] Moses 1: 34
[66] Colossians 1: 27
[67] D&C 93: 22
[68] D&C 76: 24
[69] Thomas Monson, "Until We Meet Again", *Ensign* (April 2009)
[70] Jeffrey Holland, "Broken Things to Mend", *Ensign* (April 2006)
[71] Colossians 1: 24, 29
[72] Mark 16: 15
[73] Mark 16: 18
[74] John 14: 12
[75] Revelation 20: 12

eternity, and whatever we don't record is not recorded in eternity.[76]

We use sacraments to motivate the genealogical work. The ritual of baptism, to be immersed and come out of the water, is symbolic of the resurrection: the dead coming out of their graves.[77] As baptism was instituted to remind us of our own resurrection, so baptism for the dead was instituted to remind us of their resurrection. It turns the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents,[78] such that we can't be whole without them, and they can't be whole without us. A whole and complete and perfect union must take place.[79]

We also use technology to enable the genealogical work, yet we stand only on the threshold of what we can do. Even our most enthusiastic projections capture only a tiny glimpse of the eternal consequences of our efforts.[80] Imagine a posthuman child. Using the tools of quantum archeology, she traces backwards through time and space from effects to causes. Sampling a sufficiently large portion of her present, she rediscovers you. Attaining a desired probabilistic precision for a portion of her past, she recreates you. The future-you is distinguishable from the present-you, but only as the today-you is distinguishable from the yesterday-you. As if awaking from a night's sleep, you are resurrected, and you learn to do the same for your parents.

Now, what do we hear in the consolation we've received? A voice of triumph! A voice of peace. Good news for the living and the dead. How beautiful are those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who say to the people, "your God reigns!"[81] Before the world was, God ordained that which would enable us to redeem our dead from their prison, for the prisoners must go free! Now, we prepare their escape from the grasp of that awful monster, death!"[82] Friends, shouldn't we pursue such a cause? Again, what do we hear? The voice of God consoling us, confirming our hope, proclaiming knowledge, power, love, light, immortality and eternal life![83]

Although a mourner, I've reason for consolation. My father, Layne Cannon, is gone only until the resurrection of our dead, until the transfiguration of those who remain. In the resurrection, my father will rise and reunite with my family and his friends in love and light, far beyond expectations and hopes that we can now conceive. The sublime esthetic moves me against fear to boldness:[84] I will meet my father in the morning of the resurrection.

All will rise in the resurrection. We have parents, siblings, children and friends who've gone, but they're only absent for a moment. They persist, and we'll soon meet again. Even if you or I depart, we'll yet greet

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[76] D&C 128: 7-8
[77] D&C 128: 12
[78] Malachi 4: 6
[79] D&C 128: 18
[80] Howard Hunter, "We Have a Work to Do", *Ensign* (March 1995)
[81] Isaiah 52: 7
[82] 2 Nephi 9: 10
[83] D&C 128: 19-23
[84] 1 John 4: 17-18

our family and friends, and everyone else who's gone, beyond present notions of suffering and death, in eternity, not as a euphemism for death, but rather as eternal life that's real as light and warm as love.

Some may wonder, "Will mothers have children in eternity?" Yes! Imagine a posthuman mother.[85] Her thoughts constitute creation: conceiving worlds, gestating humanity, and birthing new generations of posthumanity. Her memories constitute resurrection: as her child dies, so it rises to live, just as before leaving her arms. From a distance, perhaps only a black hole, why does she do as she does? Why should she care? Within, she's a universe of reasons. We are her thoughts and memories. We are the cells of a God in embryo.[86] Eternity must be full of worlds with innumerable children and mothers, playing and nurturing, changing and remembering, as we do.

I'll make a few more remarks on ritual and engineering. Ritual without engineering is impotent, and engineering without ritual is meaningless. They are necessarily and inseparably connected. We must empower meaning to become God.

Fundamentalists, how are you going to save us with authority alone? Your authorities say, "faith without action is dead."[87] Do you suppose we could do nothing and God would deliver us? Or do you suppose God would deliver us while we don't make use of the means provided? If so, you've supposed in vain.[88] You cannot save us with authority alone, but ritual can strengthen our trust in God and our future.[89]

Atheists, how are you going to save us with science alone? Even pushed to its limits, science remains at a distance from action, fragmentary, incomplete, and never finished. Life can't wait. Living and acting must run ahead of science,[90] those inspired by a strenuous mood will always outwear those who aren't, and religion will drive irreligion to the wall.[91] You cannot save us with science alone, but engineering can realize our hopes.

We're in just as good a world as we'll ever attain to, from now to all eternity, unless we make it ourselves, by the inspiration of God, and according to the laws that govern and control matter. If we don't by these means make the better world we anticipate, we'll never enjoy it. We'll only enjoy the world we've labored to make.[92] This must be true. We must make it true, engineering within our context of opportunity, working within our sphere of grace. Indeed, we must trust that God decrees unalterably according to our desires, whether for life or death,[93] and express through action our will to life, not as exploitation or servitude,[94] but

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[85] Eliza Snow, "O My Father", *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 292
[86] Orson Whitney in *Collected Discourses* (Madison Wisconsin: BHS Pub, 1987) 3: 45
[87] James 2: 20
[88] Alma 60: 11, 21
[89] Alma 25: 15-16
[90] Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford: University Press, 1912) 325-327
[91] James, *The will to believe, and other essays in popular philosophy, and Human immortality* 213
[92] Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses* 3: 336
[93] Alma 29: 4-5
[94] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1907) 226

as eternal atonement in ever broader and deeper friendship.[95] We must save ourselves,[96] and all our dead.[97] Otherwise, there's no meaningful existence,[98] and we're damned as clearly as hell can do it.[99]

Our sacraments and technologies are good for nothing without each other, so let's move beyond infancy to maturity.[100] Fundamentalists, atheists, and all humanity, we must change. Change! Be Christ! Trust in God, that we'll join posthumanity to the extent it exists, and that we'll make posthumanity to the extent it doesn't. Otherwise, neither science nor religion will save us or our dead from extinction or worse.

I've intended my remarks for all. I claim no enemies. I hate oppression, but I love everyone, even when we disagree. I love all humanity, especially you my friends, not as being human, but rather as becoming posthuman. We're called the children of God, but we don't yet know fully what we'll be. We don't even know each other, our hearts and history, as we should.[101] We see in each other only partial reflections of ourselves, but we should trust, that when we change, Christ will appear.[102] We'll see and be Christ, and know fully as we're fully known.[103] I add no more. God bless us all. Amen.

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[95] John 15: 15

[96] Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 227

[97] Joel Johnson, "High on the Mountain Top", *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 5

[98] D&C 93: 30

[99] D&C 19: 7

[100] Hebrews 5: 12-14

[101] 1 Corinthians 8: 2

[102] 1 Corinthians 13: 9-12

[103] 1 John 3: 2