

Eternal Change

The last day of
Christmas week.

CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR, how many sermons have been preached or delivered on those two periods of our daily living. This morning it happens to be the last day of the old year, 1972. It also happens to be the first day of a new week. Tomorrow is the first day of a New Year. Each day when we rise we are given a New Page of life to write upon. We are not given the promise that at evening we shall be here to write finis to the page. We take it for granted that we shall. We have a friend or acquaintance who rises with us in the morning and suddenly he is among us no longer. There is a period in mid-sentence on his page of life for that day. We are startled and dismayed. In our various ways we say he is dead, he has passed on, he has been called to God, he has passed beyond the veil, he has gone to meet his maker. I like to think he has found a NEW Year, been given a new page of life on which to write. For in life we are in death and the two are inseparable... "Time with ~~the~~ ever rolling years, Bears all it's sons away" ~~and~~ The dream of the old year dies at the opening of the New. We have all sorts of cliches to describe the outgoing year and the approach of the new, yet they too are inseparable. There is no sudden, jarring transition, it is all eternal and one year flows smoothly into another. Humanity has it's own way of marking the transition; To a great portion of the humanity of the world it

New Year for
those who have
passed on.

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is
an occasion of festivity and rejoicing, to some
it is just another opportunity for an excuse to
"whoop it up", and to the liquor industry it is
an occasion of great rejoicing over the upswell of
profits. So, in our various ways, all humanity
celebrates the advent of the New Year. We have put
Christmas behind us, part of the Old Year, part of
the Past. There are some things we are a bit ashamed
of remembering perhaps. It is better to forget as
soon as possible the disappointment and betrayal
in young eyes when it is discovered that some
coveted toy, super-advertised over T.V., is nothing
more than a chunk of crumbling plastic that ^{Holds} has no
more than a minutes lasting interest. Christmas is
essentially a children's Day, the story of the birth
of the Saviour of the world who came not only to
the world to heal the sick, the maimed and the blind
but to forgive the sins of Mankind. He it was who
said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for
such is the Kingdom of Heaven." "Except you become
as little children ye shall nowise enter the King-
dom of Heaven." "A little child shall lead them."
We acknowledge all this and with a sigh of relief
turn to the New Year hoping that something will
happen during 1973 that will make it historically
different and more soul satisfying than other years.
So we talk about turning over a new leaf, or turn-
ing another page. We can do that because each day

Christmas 9
Children .

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each week , each month, each year, is a new page already turned for us, waiting for us to write the record. You cannot write mine, nor I yours. Each of us is his or her own author. True we can be influenced, or may influence others but each of us alone has to write what God shall see. We share that great privilege with the hosts that have passed on this road of life before us and the hosts that shall pass this way after we have gone.

When we rise each morning we have a new page upon which to write. Wherewithall shall we fill it and on what lines will the sun set. It is a page of life, this oncoming New Year We may only partially fill it. Many are called away with but few lines written. Many are overcome with frustrations, ~~and~~ in desperation try to turn a new leaf only to find that the first must be completed before the next can be made of use. All too many of us fill a clean page with scribblings. A chaos of inconclusions. Fortunate is he that can fill his page, line upon line, with effort truly made, the realization that each of us has a kinship with an Authority beyond ourselves. A power that is ever present, which can be tapped at will by prayer. Not a five day week privilege but a seven day week with a twenty four hour service through ^{OUT} eternity.

Incomprehensible
scribblings.

Availability of
prayer.

4.

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N.Y. Resolutions

The Gospel of the Hereafter. Another year another page , another life. Hereafter I will be no more a slave to this temptation or that habit. Hereafter I will attempt to mend my broken fences, do those things I should do and leave undone those things I should not do. An innermost, unspoken prayer that in different ways we all pray at one time or another. Commonly called new years resolutions. The wish is there but the will to carry it out is weak.

Suddenly to this prayer comes the thundering response that refutes all my plans, faint hearted hopes and silent fears. "There is no Hereafter, there is only Now!!!" From this instant!!!" The echo rolls back among the years and returns to the years to come and always the echo is "NOW" A reminder to our wills of the prayer promise we had unconsciously made to a POWER Whose throne is the Universe, of which we too are a part.

Impulsive
Good.

How many of us have had the experience of the thought of doing something for someone on the impulse of the moment. We hesitate, count the cost, estimate possible ridicule, anticipate misunderstanding, and the NOW that was so present passes silently by. "Oh for why and for what are we waiting

While our brothers droop and die?

And on every wind of the heavens,

A wasted life goes by.

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One of the most powerful proofs of immediate change is given us in the New Testament. Jesus says to perfect strangers, "Follow Me!" They drop everything - NOW and follow him. They did not stop to count the cost, or form a committee to look into the situation, or say "sometime in the hereafter we will follow you."

In Isaiah 65:17 we read the prophecy, 'For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former (troubles) shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.' Could we but realize ^{and remember} that we are part of an Eternal plan, part of the universe round about us, instruments of design to work with an All Wise Creator, not hereafter, but NOW. For us who have reached three score and ten the passing years do not drag their feet, but on looking back, if a young person were to ask me, "What is there for me to do?" my answer would be "Look around you, do something, for someone, and do it NOW, for Christ's Sake!" I mean that literally. When we really do something because we think Our Lord would wish us to do it, we do it with no thought of gain or prestige, and we may blunder but He will know and recognize what we are trying to do, give us strength to rise again if we fall or fail and the miracle is that we never feel tired, (can look our fellow man straight in the eye and perhaps make him curious enough to ask what makes us tick. Like

Doing what
we have to do
and doing it
NOW

Perhaps delete
(. . .)

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in that case
the Sammarian woman who talked to Jesus at the
well we had better have the right answer ready.)

Just as we find ourselves in a new year just
so that new year will involve us in new situations.
It is up to us to make what use we can of them,
to be of use to God, to our fellow men and to
ourselves. There is no situation which we may face
in our sojourn in eternity that we have to face
alone, ~~that~~. He who makes all things new will ^{NEVER} refuse
His help if our struggle is beyond our strength.

We live in times of change. Change is part and
parcel of Eternity. Change brings with it Newness
"New occasions bring new duties." "The old order
changeth, yielding place to new, And God fulfils
Himself in many ways."

Behold all things are made new: Now each moment
we live and have our Be-ing. We look in awe at a starry
sky and something whispers to us of Mystery.
Questions arise in our minds and are followed by
endless questions and thought. ~~and~~ ^{we} are staggered
in our imagination of eternity. To think and know
within ourselves that we are an infinitesimal part of
this great Universe, part of the Plan and Power
that holds the stars in their course and the eternal
continuity of galaxy after galaxy, is such knowledge
that we can only whisper in prayer: "This is too
great for me. I Believe, help Thou my unbelief!"
And we start the incoming year with another all
trascending thought: "Oh God how great Thou art!"

New situations

*Thought of the
Universe.*

*How Great Thou
Art!!*

Had's sermon

Church address

W. L. J.