

A Testament of Devotion

The Eternal Now and Social Concern

1. There is an experience of the Eternal breaking into time, which transforms all life into a miracle of faith and action. Unspeakable, profound, and full of glory as an inward experience, it is the root of concern for all creation, the true ground of social endeavor. This inward Life and the outward Concern are truly one whole. (page 65)
2. We are in an era of This-sidedness, with a passionate anxiety about economics and political organization...the church itself has largely gone "this-sided," and seems to be predominantly concerned with this world, with time, and with the temporal order. And the test of the worthwhileness of an experience of Eternity has become: "Does it change things in time? If so, let us keep it, if not, let us discard it." This is a lamentable reversal of the true order of dependence. Time is no judge of Eternity. It is the Eternal who is the judge and tester of time. (page 66-67)
3. We live our lives at two levels simultaneously, the level of time and the level of the Timeless. They form one sequence, with fluctuating border between them. Sometimes the...Eternal is in the ascendancy, but we still are aware of our daily temporal routine. Sometimes...we are chiefly in the world of time, yet we are haunted by a smaller sense of Presence in the margin of consciousness. (page 67-68)
4. The ordinary person, busy earning a living, exercises care, caution, foresight...and calculates probabilities. They study the past in order to predict and control the future. Then, when all factors are weighed and plotted with energy and industry, they will themselves into persistent activity... much religious work is carried on in just this same way. (page 68-69)
5. There comes a time when Presence *steals upon us*, unexpectedly and is not the product of agonized effort... meeting the daily routine, yet never losing the sense of Presence. (page 69-70)
6. The Now...is the seat and region of the Divine Presence itself...Between the relinquished past and the untrodden future stands this holy Now, whose bulk has swelled to cosmic size, for within the Now is the dwelling place of God. In the Now we are at home at last. (page 70-71)
7. The sense of Presence carries within it a sense of our lives being in large part guided, dynamically moved from beyond our usual selves...The energizing, dynamic center is not in us but in the Divine Presence in which we share. Religion is not *our* concern; it is God's concern. The sooner we stop thinking we are the energetic operators of religion and discover that God is at work, as the Initiator, so much the sooner do we discover that our task is to call all humankind to *be still and know*, listen, harken in quiet invitation to the subtle promptings of the Divine. (page 72)
8. Many well-intentioned people are so preoccupied with the clatter of effort to do something *for* God that they don't hear the Divine asking that the Spirit might do something *through* them. ...For the Eternal is urgently, and actively breaking into time, working through those who are willing to *be laid hold upon*, to surrender...*self-originated* effort, and let the Eternal be the dynamic guide in recreating through us. (page 72-74)

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9. The first fruit of the Spirit is unspeakable joy. The second fruit is love...In the Eternal Now all humankind are seen in a new way. We enfold them in our love, and we and they are enfolded together within the great Love of God...Once walk in the Now and all are changed in our sight...They aren't just masses of struggling beings, furthering or thwarting our ambitions...We become identified with them and suffer when they suffer and rejoice when they rejoice. (page 74)
10. What is the aim of this Divine Love loving its way into and through us to others? It is that they too may make the great discovery, that they also may find – and be found by God. (page 75)
11. The third element in the experience of Presence, after love and joy, is peace. I make bold to speak of this even at this hour when the tragedies of the world are heavy upon us. (page 76)
12. For the experience of Presence is the experience of peace, and the experience of peace is the experience not of inaction but of power, and the experience of power is the experience of a pursuing Love that loves its way untiringly to victory. (page 77-78)
13. Before living in the Eternal Now, we thought that the past had to be read cautiously, the future had to be planned with care...we must be rational, sensible, intelligent, shrewd. But then comes the reality of the Presence, and the Now-Eternal is found to underlie and generate all things temporal. And a life of amazing, victorious faith-living sets in...not with strained eyebrows and tense muscles but in peace and power and confidence we work upon such hopeless tasks as the elimination of war and set out toward world-brotherhood and interracial fraternity in a world where all the calculated chances of success are meagre. (page 78)
14. There is more to the experience of God than that of being plucked out of the world. The fuller experience is a Love which sends us out into the world...For the experience of an inflooding, all-enfolding Love is of a Love which *embraces all creation*, not just our little, petty selves.
15. All creation has a new value...wherein not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Spirit...There is a tendering of the soul toward everything in creation...There is a sense in this tenderness that we become one with God and bear in our quivering souls the sins and burdens, the benightedness and the tragedy of the creatures of the whole world and suffer in their suffering. (page 80-81)
16. Against this cosmic suffering and cosmic responsibility we must set the special responsibility experienced in a *concern*...a concrete task without which all that experience of love and responsibility might evaporate into vague yearnings for a golden Paradise...The Loving Presence...considerately puts upon each of us just a few central tasks...these special undertakings which are our share in the joyous burdens of love. (page 82-83)
17. Social concern is the dynamic Life of God at work in the world... A concern is God-initiated, often surprising, always holy, for the Life of God is breaking through into the world. (page 85)

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