

THE FUTURE WAY OF LIFE

I.

A young man of my acquaintance tried to become an ambulance driver in Egypt because he considered himself a Christian Pacifist. This plan failed; he was drafted. Whereupon he found that he was not a real Pacifist. But now, he went to the other extreme; he left the Episcopal Church. Not being able to live up to his own allegedly Christian standards, he decided to become a "pagan" all round, without trimming. It must have broken his heart, this absurd decision, because the daily service of prayer and praise used to fill him with joy.

Everybody knows that thousands of good boys are in a similar predicament, though perhaps not that extreme. Why not help them? But I find that most people are embarrassed. I see no reason for embarrassment.

Certainly, if our young soldiers now consider themselves as "fallen men," and confuse this fact with paganism, it is not their own fault. The Civilian tradition of thought during the last decades did little to encompass the character of the soldier. And so, noble energy goes to waste, in many souls.

The place of the soldier as against the thinker, the scientist, has to be illuminated and to be redefined. Since the millions are soldiers, now, this mighty republic will lose its identity with its scientific and rational past if the connection between soldier and science is not found. The era of science must allot a reasonable place to the militant fighter. How can War and Peace be lived by one homogeneous and catholic people of thinkers and soldiers? Instead of our cutting them into two frustrated halves of brutes and brains, how can the human soul triumph over the separation of thinkers and soldiers?

Is it true that "the only answer seems to be to have a completely separated body of people to do the thinking and planning of which the average 'warrior' seems incapable"? This sentence is from a naval officer's letter, after thirteen months of service on a destroyer in the Pacific. And he goes on to say: "Somehow I don't seem to be able to reconcile the ideas of responsibility to the immediate job at hand and rather complete irresponsibility to the greater task of creating a new and somehow better world. ...My greatest need at present is to talk seriously with someone outside the service who is concerned more with the future than with the present contingency of shooting down an enemy unit associated with a machine which must be utterly

destroyed then forgotten while one concentrates on the means for eliminating the next unit."

And his letter continues: "The thing that has struck me as most dominant in the 'soldier' is the idea of 'forgetfulness'. This characteristic is most evident in our men..." (follows description of battle scenes)

"I know you can help me to be a better 'soldier'. If you don't maintain some sort of an ideological structure for us to gather up when we return I don't know what will happen - but I feel certain that you won't let us down."

Accordingly, I shall try to redefine the interaction of soldiers and thinkers. For this purpose, the current identification of war with paganism and of peace with modernity will have to be abandoned.

Our fighting boys are not pagans, and our conscientious objectors are not "more" progressive. In clarifying this confusion, a new definition of paganism was found by another friend of mine, a college senior. And his case may start us off on the discovery of the future way of life. Instead of being confused by a welter of experiences, he had been chilled by a dearth of reality. He started, then, at the opposite extreme, but ended up at the same solution: a way of life which would include peace and war, reason and faith, thinkers and soldiers.

II.

"Is not the whole Old Testament a collection of 'paganisms'?" These words were said without much emphasis by the college senior. When I mentioned this feat of ingenuity to his teacher of English, he said, "Arthur probably did not know what the word paganism means." However, it is not quite so simple in this man's case. His great grandfather was College President, his grandfather headed a very famous Theological Seminary, his father is a missionary and the head of a big school. So, I do not think that it is with him as with most of the young who do not know who Abel or Moses or David were, let alone Ruth, or Isaac, or Absalom. No, he meant by paganism something bygone and insufficient. He did not use the word as praise. But he thought that he could sit in judgment over the "paganisms" of the Old Testament. He believed that he had inherited Christianity without the impact of the "pagan" Old Testament, and without a personal acceptance of the continuous order created by our faith. He did not know that anybody makes himself into a pagan when he mistakes the belief in the trinity for a hereditary property. He then becomes an "absentee owner" of the spirit, and such an attitude is as disastrous as the

Irish landlord's absenteeism.

Most people I know who still care for the New Testament, poohpoo the terrible Jehovah as though he were another kind of God than the one revealed in the further quest. Their own sugaring of the deity, ending in pacifism, ethical culture, humanity, led these friends to an overconsumption of sweetness and an underconsumption of brain.

It would take a book to pursue the consequences of the "Sweet Jesus" heresy into each department of life. It certainly makes the flow of life into the future impossible. Half of our people, nine-tenths of the world, are at war. The God who is a God of War as well as of Peace will crush the worshippers of their own "wishful-thinking-about-God" easily and rightly. These "Marcionites" in the church of today stir up the persecution of the churches by those who are and have to be at war, dangerously. Because these men are defeatists. Marcion had to condemn marriage just as much as wars. Property, children, family, and war go together; the pacifists must forego these goods or they are insincere.

But Arthur was sincere. No more sincere boy in the world. And he asked because he still felt that he might be wrong. What should I do?

If I show him, I said to myself, that the first verses of Genesis reveal the secret of the Trinity,- Father and Spirit, Father and Son,- he will not be impressed, I suppose. This generation will not be impressed by any theology whatsoever. (And the reader may breathe more freely from now on; he will be spared denominational squabbles.)

So, I turned not to the beginning, but to the end of the book, and I said: "You can read the whole Old Testament, or the first five books, or any of the prophets, or the first three verses. It says the same everywhere. But in your own language, it speaks in the last two verses of the last book of the last group in the whole. They are ascribed to the prophet Malachi, and he must have been as sociology-bitten as you are. For he expressed the secret of the Father-God, Spirit-Father, Father-Son, mystery, in sociological terms: "Each time," the prophet said, "when the hearts of the fathers and the hearts of the children are not turned to each other, the land is cursed."

The land is cursed today. The hearts of the parents and the hearts of the children do not entertain the same hopes and fears. For example, five years ago, a minister in New York City established a common living center for graduates from one of the great Universities. And when they gathered in 1939 before

the war,- these young business men and lawyers,- the wave of the future had engulfed them all; they all were for a mild form of Fascism. And they certainly had no religious or political convictions in common with their parent generation. They had perhaps no very definite convictions, themselves. But, instinctively, deep down in their impulses, they expected regimentation and were ready to be regimented. And their soul was of no great concern to them. Now, this situation of the young is a biological fact just as is the fact that you have two legs; each generation has its predilections. The previous one had a social worker's tender conscience and a belief in freedom. And that again is a fact. These two facts are pre-religious, pre-christian, pre-historical. For no one generation can make history all by itself simply on the basis of its predilections.

III.

If one generation could be alone on this earth, and could forget about their fathers and their children, they would need no religion, no revelation of Father, Spirit and Son. Obviously, every one of these words connotes some process which is not identified with a single generation. The terms are clear. In the Divinity, Father and Son unfold the quality of being, by spreading it through two generations. And the Spirit, lest he be confused with the "wit" of the moment, is explicitly said to ascend from the interaction of two generations, the Father and the Son.

Neither the social workers nor the fascists have a future. For, the ethics of no particular generation can survive that generation. Ethics, after all, are mores. And mores, thank God, are transient, when they are good mores.

When I showed Arthur the sociological expression of our faith in Malachi, he immediately understood that neither paganism nor Christianity had to do with ethics, but with man's attitude to the products of his own brain. The pagan worships the products of his own genius. The Christian worships his maker's creative spirit. The pagan equates the life span of his own generation with the life span of that energy which allows him to think. And it is the pagan's obsession to believe that his mind is generated within him at his birth. But this is not so.

Man's life span goes from birth to death, and so, he usually thinks of his mind as being his lifetime companion, progressing also from birth to death. However, while this life stretches from the cradle to the grave, the life span of an inspiration reaches from the middle of one man's life to the middle of the life in the next generation. Thus, the difference

between our physical and mental existence is expressed in the difference of their periods or rhythms. As carriers of physical life, we feel our life to be an unbroken sequence. As carriers of valid thinking, as scientists, rulers, writers, parents, experts, officers, we can't have peace if we try to imprison this thinking process within us or if we think of it as synchronized with our own biographical rhythm.

These ways of thought invade our physical existence in the middle of life, mould us, put us into our class, vocation, or office. And by our functioning in them and under "the rules of the game," we start younger men on the road to succeeding us in our social role. Shaped life attracts younger, more shapeless life always, because in nature all shapeliness commands reiteration. (The psychoanalysts call this the "compulsion to repeat," but it is the great economic law of the universe.) The young always try to inherit everything which there is to inherit from the past.

For instance, every boy or girl in this country learns the three R's. Now, perhaps they would have better minds if they learned the Greek letters and language instead, but they have no choice. This English is their heritage. Long before they could choose, their elders have moulded their minds and made them into English speakers, English readers, English writers, and accountants. The young depend on the choices made for them by their elders. An heir is not somebody who can choose what he shall inherit; if he could make his choice, he would be self-made. But, in so far as his inheritance is determined, he is an heir, and under the laws of heredity. And the first and last word of heredity means that his background is given. He does, however, determine the background of the next generation.

Hence, one's generation's background is due to the previous generation's foreground. My father's values determined my education. And by no action of mine can I cancel out the fact that his education preceded my own judgments. I am more the product of his intent or his omissions than his own life was. I am his heir. Only my own son or students may fully reflect my own choices.

Society is based upon a principle of dovetailing which is unknown in the animal kingdom. To ourselves and to the education of ourselves, we arrive too late. The most important effects have already affected us when we come to think of them. Of course when they have done their work, we may reconsider and doubt them, and act differently. But, since we ourselves are already determined, our new conclusions stand a fairer chance of bearing fruit in others than in ourselves.

IV.

This constitutes the great human secret. Mendel's mutation takes place in the conception and birth of the individual. Our historical mutability, on the other hand, is effective as a mental relation between two people, two generations, two times. Those qualities or energies which link at least two, and weld them into a cooperative being, "transpeciate" our species constantly into new men; naturally, these qualities can only be found when they are not looked for within the individual. In him we shall never discover how any social function unifies the speaker and the doer, the first and the second doer, and so on. These energies must be processes between two minds, two hearts, two people, at least; perhaps between many more. The obstinacy with which psychology has studied the mental processes within the individual, is no proof that its method is fruitful. The dream of a self-taught, self-ruling man is a bad dream. The measure for teaching and ruling cannot be found from the abnormal compression of these processes into one individual. Historical man is taught by others, and rules others; and in these relations, he is compelled to realize himself. "He," never exists, but is always between two times, two ages, as son and father, layman and expert, the end of one era, and the beginning of another. In their despair, the mental monadists - who look for the mind inside the individual - call our time a period of transition. Sheer nonsense; the essence of time is transition. In so far as we act or speak, we can act or speak meaningfully only between two other generations preceding and succeeding us, because we always come too late to ourselves.

My self is not the container for my acts and ideas. My acts carry out the ideas implanted in myself. My ideas plant the acts in somebody else because he will be purer to receive them. Since this is so, our will is not a vehicle for making ourselves. Freedom of the will is not the subject matter for self-worship or self-reliance. Freedom is given us because of our functions as enders and beginners. Our function as children requires to be superseded by our function as parents. The child is certainly not father of the man; I think that this is the central fallacy of mental theory. The romanticism of Rousseau and Wordsworth destroyed the continuity between generations; and as a substitute condemned the poor children to carry a burden which rightly their elders should bear. The child prodigy of the 19th century is the ghastly result of this impatience with the individual. He was in a hurry to be his own father; as a reaction, he usually remained childish. Freedom is given us for the race. If we try to interpret freedom as given us for ourselves, we grossly exaggerate our abilities. If we deny freedom, we fall into the snares of racial servitude. Jesus remained under the Jewish law to the end of his first thirty years. It took him the

time span of what is called one generation, to outgrow the synagogue. His obedience consisted in his patient walk through life. The risen Christ may walk with all men. He could not belong to the ages if he had gone at nineteen into the desert and founded a sect then and there. In his walk through his generation if we walk with him, we are all freed from our native limitations.

It is the whole content of Christianity that we are free, but that we arrive too late at our own freedom for fully wielding its liberating forces ourselves. Our own time is a station between the times which our freedom rejects and the times which our patience prepares. The meaning of liberty is our power of creating a new kind of man. This power is capable of curing the breach between the mere fashions of each separate generation. Enslaved by the latest trend and current events, we rush to the worship of the gods of our days. And these gods of the day follow each other in a cycle similar to the business cycle. Every season of the mind automatically begets its undertaker in form of the opposite philosophy. And in the cycle of all possible philosophies the poor devils are caught blindly.

But we can wake up and see the cycle and break its spell and create peace beyond the warring spirits of the times. This power was the distinguishing feature of our era. Therefore when this power goes into eclipse, we are back to paganism, immediately. And in paganism, eternal war is the order of the day, and war only, between all the spirits of men. Accordingly, the Nazis who proclaimed eternal war, and "annihilation" and "elimination", banked on the one generation of the "Youth Movement" which broke away from all peaceful relations with their parents. All the revolutionaries in Europe are "matters of one age" and play up their own spirit ruthlessly. The Nazis reveal that if one generation may carry out its temporal spirit unhampered, war becomes the only principle of life.

But it is no good to retreat, in the face of this relapse into paganism, into the eternal city of peace. The eternalists would like to look down with superiority into the arena of human fighting. We have heard their protest of an eternal peace, and certainly the Pacifists are the indispensable antithesis to the ghastly warhoops of the temporal mind. But the antithesis is Pharisean and incomplete.

They are right when they abhor war as the order of the world; it certainly is its disorder. The world was created for peace. But they are wrong when they do not add that the act of creating the world is a perpetual act. What we call the creation of the world is not an event of yesterday, but the event of all times, and goes on right under our noses. Every generation has the divine liberty of recreating the world.

The pagan mind stares at war, finds it everywhere and proclaims it the form of life. The eternalist stares at peace and proclaims it the content of life. Both suffer from a fixation. Both are lacking in freedom. The soul knows that we move in a world at war to bring peace into it. In every hour of history the recreation of that peace which was created into the world as its goal from the beginning, is the topic of our fight. Between the war party who places itself on the side of the world "as it is", only, and the peace party which places itself on the side of God only, our loves, hopes and beliefs force us to proclaim a "war and peace" party. The Cities of Men and the City of God form one crucial unity in a living person. The chaotic world at war, and the emerging new peace for this chaos which made the war, are the two aspects of a mankind in cooperation.

V.

At this point, the majesty of the educational vogue of the last hundred years becomes clear. Liberalism as mere anarchy of beliefs or values does not impress me. But liberalism as willingness of parents to give their children a futuristic education, strikes me as great. These parents were ready to let their children go further than they themselves could reach. The true Christian spirit of Liberalism lies in this willingness of whole generations to let the next generation go into a future precluded to the parents themselves.

Since the liberal anarchy of standards for the individual around us is so colossal our fundamentalists easily overlook this very definite creed of the agnostic age. Between the generations, a bond of parent's love and children's faith was established which translated the parents' hopes into the children's lives. This should make us feel reverent.

However, although the parents made the sacrifice, the institutions of learning did not do the same. When the boys came to school and college, the older generation declined to mould them into new men. The transpersonal energies which connect two ages, were denied. Man had, they were told, his own mind to and for himself. And so the teachers and students on our Campuses lived under the fiction that they were contemporaries and could feel and think the same things. Nobody was responsible for anybody else's thoughts; nobody was meant to be his brother's keeper.

At this moment, a young generation is in a new kind of war, a war which is not based on a settled society of the past, but on an industrial society of constant flux and change. This generation does not fight as all former patriots did, for the father's laws and order, because they know from their fathers

themselves that change is of the essence. Change, so they have been taught, is their birthright. So, if they shall fight, the soldiers must fight for a future beyond the war, not for the past as it was before this crisis.

Our soldiers wait for opportunities, not simply of returning home, but of turning towards a new peace and of immigrating into the future. The morale of this army will depend largely on a change of heart in the articulating generations, the people who teach, write, speak, and occasionally think.

Our schools have tried to teach the boys and girls the values which we feel they should think. That usually meant that they were asked to feel that which we thought. So they ceased to feel. Now, the discovery of the two-generation-way of the mind in action, involves a tremendous change. The young first must be allowed to feel, to scent, to presage, to fight for themselves, to quench evil, to protect the world before we can speak to them theoretically. The old must think out lucidly that which the young have felt or can feel about the future. "We may conceive humanity as engaged in an internecine conflict between youth and age. Youth is not defined by years but by the creative impulse to make something. The aged are those, who before all things, desire not to make a mistake. Logic is the olive branch from the old to the young."*

In other words, the thinker (any man, old or young, who is asked a question, finds himself in this awkward role) should not ask the doer (the man who is about to act, perhaps on the basis of his answer) to share the detachment of the thinker. This, however, is what our academic education does, and the detachment of the thinker-answerer is recommended as the only right emotional climate. "Don't get excited" is no wise counsel to young men. If they no longer can get excited, the world decays, just as much as when the old men can't keep cool.

Therefore, the thinkers should try to think out clearly the same processes which work up the emotions of the soldier of life so deeply that he is willing to give his life for safeguarding order. The thinker's clarity should match the soldier's intensity, without ever forgetting that by his clarity he tries to rival the heat engendered in a human heart. Therefore, the thinker depends upon the flames of passion burning in the doer, and these high temperatures provoke and challenge his effort in lucidity and dispassionateness. These flames must burn without smoke.

* Alfred N. Whitehead, "The Aims of Education, New York, 1929, p. 179

The collaboration of soldiers and thinkers must be the central article of any society's constitution. Only then, will the thinkers drop all pettiness and rediscover those truths which are vital.

VI.

This would be nothing but applied Christianity. It would carry the evangelical relation which has grown up between parents and children during the century of Liberalism to its logical conclusion. And the schools and colleges would now undergo the same conversion which the physical parents underwent when the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table was buried.

When the parents ceased to play God Almighty for the beliefs of their children, they did something of significance for the universal relation between thinkers and soldiers: they trusted the young.

Must not anybody who is asked a question about the road, and has to find an answer, speak cautiously, trying to make no mistake because the other fellow might march off wrongly upon the answer? The soul's delight is in doing this, here; the mind's genius is to think all in the proper system. As cautious as my answer to the stranger who asks for directions, as bold must be the action of the man who goes to war. Thought is born by circumspection. But a soul is born through the growing pains of suffering in action.

Before this war, our schools have preached to the young to avoid conflict, to avoid pains, even the growing pains of that suffering which is the inexorable counterpart of acting according to your heart's command. When Aeschylus said that the counsel of Zeus prevailed, which ordained that the man who acted had to suffer, he said something as true as that "two and two is four." But this interplay of action and "passion," doing and paying the penalty for it, has been ridiculed by sociologists, psychologists and all the monadists. And so, they sterilized the young.

Arthur, the asker of the bold question, "Is not the Old Testament a bundle of paganisms," may set us right. He came out right into the open trusting his instinct, and gave battle; he took the risk of blundering. However, he also took the trouble of exposing this impulse to criticism. He trusted himself and he trusted his older friend. In this double trust, there could grow up a new answer which his generation could understand. If the two trusts could be made to grow, both till they embraced the whole of life and truth, the people would build the bridge of real time again, after a lag of thirty years. For thirty years,

the Holy Ghost had abdicated in favor of the Spirit of the Times and the wit of the individual. The thinking of our college men became childish because the old and young tried to obliterate their difference in age, and played together as though they were of one age. Compromise became the great slogan. Before they probed into the depth of their feelings or the profoundness of their thoughts, people hastened to compromise. And these compromises satisfied as much as did the Missouri compromise; it did not create one common reality between different generations. Since nobody took the trouble to pour his real desire or his real vision into the compromise, no promise was fulfilled by it, and all hope was frustrated.

When my friend Arthur understood this, he wrote me one sentence which touched me to the quick. I had not foreseen this reaction; and I still stand in admiration before this lucid sentence: "Oh," he wrote, and this is a literal quotation, "I am a pagan; for, I have no speech."

He had discovered paganism to be the lack of relation between the generations of mankind. And in the process, he had made the much more important discovery that speech is not the by-product of individual action or individual thinking, but that we speak with power only when acts and thoughts meet. Our tongue, our power of the word to which the millions obediently march and serve and sacrifice, is not the "expression" of scientific ideas, or the war cry of blindly marching cohorts. The living speech of a community results from the polarization of acts and thoughts; like the spark which crosses the dark gap between the positive and negative pole of electricity, speech is a flaming arc, connecting different generations. On the one hand, blind acts are speechless, and who does not know the dumbness of the mere busybody? But - and that is mostly forgotten - similarly, abstract ideas are speechless; in a sense, all science is nearly speechless: it is a whisper between experts. Only when taught, only when facing a new generation, does science recover speech. The blessing which results when thinkers and soldiers face each other is that public speaking is reborn. Speech blends the two processes of pure thought and pure action. Arthur found himself outside this electric arc; but whereas most of us remain unconscious of our exile, Arthur discovered that we have, as children and parents, a spiritual office, in the never ending chain of generations. The links of a chain must overlap. The evolutionary scheme of the last century omitted this big question of overlapping, of putting the rings of the chain together. Lest the chain remain unforged, children and parents cannot behave as though they were contemporaries. Both must go to the edge of life, in militancy against danger, for the reorientation of the species; one exposing their physical life as soldiers, the other exposing their social reputation as thinkers. (This is the reason why no progress in human thought is possible

without the martyrs of thought or science.) A brave man is he who risks his status quo lest new life be stifled or higher life be destroyed. When we eat, when we breathe, we integrate lower life into richer life; our social acts obey the same law. The physical existence, in the soldier's case, and in the thinker's case, the moral existence, are the chips which we stake for the essence.

By now, the soldier will be seen as a spiritual agent, while we come to admit that thinking itself is risky action. The "spirit" is a comprehensive term for both, action and thinking. When the spirit of France died, she lost Paris, her intellectual center, and Toulon, the center of her imperial strength, both. To the spirit, mind and body are both mere matériel.

If there is one spirit, thinkers and soldiers move in one common sense. And there is one spirit when the parent-thinker in us brings up his pearl of thought out of the same darkness in which the son is plunged by the feelings and passions of his youth. We should think up to our impulses and feelings, not as it is the fashion, drag our lives behind some abstraction, some "ism," of our mind's making. If a thinker rethinks the truth in the light of a doer's vital impulses and actions, the future way of life lies open again as it was proclaimed in the beginning of our era as the good news. New lives may be lived in freedom; the young may trust their vital instincts, no guilt from the past shall asperse them, for their elders will forge an armour of thought around their heart's flames. The expert may retranslate this into theology. For my naval "JG", the quotation of "original sin" at this point would add little. He is impatient to see the right relation restored: "I feel certain you won't let us down."

Thinking for soldiers, instead of ruminating for children, is a very new aspect of research and education. But this is the reform of our educational system which the three witnesses demand; the speechless college senior, the "forgetful" lieutenant, and the man who leaves the Church when he enters the army. Higher education in the future can only be planned for people who serve and fight life's battles, on whatever fighting front.

Otherwise, the bodies of the young might be slaughtered for the dated ideas of a senile science or the mature ideas of truth might be butchered by the rash instincts of brutes. In between lies the road of atonement between the body of young life and the mind of old life. These two have to coexist and to interpenetrate.

In this, what else do we say than that which was known always? The coexistence of more than one generation at the same time, the deliverance from blind cycles and sequences, was called

the achievement of the Holy Spirit. He was conceived as proceeding from the Father and the Son. We all know that a father's mind should enter into the impulses of his son. That is the reason why nobody may call himself a father, by mere physical procreation. Fatherhood is rethinking the world in the light of one's children. Why is God so inexhaustibly original? Because he rethinks the world for every generation of his children.

Beyond the level of brains or brutes, of scientists and warriors, the soul is born. The soul in the scientist makes him into a teacher; and the soul of the warrior turns him into a soldier. All through this essay, we spoke not of "scientist" and "warrior," but of "soldier" and "thinker," because all the time we anticipated a mutual recognition, between the representatives of war and the representatives of peace. They are brothers. They can speak to each other. And this is the inspiration which was promised us as the Comforter through the ages.