

THE NEW NATURE

OF

CHRISTIANITY

A Task for Drafted Thinkers and Free Soldiers.

by

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VI

Introduction: "God is the People."

A letter to the author in which the questions of the book are asked.

APO 634, August 29, 1943

Dear Professor,

Many times since leaving Dartmouth I have found myself wondering what you were saying and thinking on a given subject or what advice you might supply, I have tried to write you at different times but the result seemed silly and unsatisfactory. This time I hope to make a go of it.

To this day I am still at loggerheads with Gene and Dick via mail with a line of thinking for which you were the impetus, I have stood for political mass action and materialism. Felt that the experiment of Camp William James\*) was doomed as an isolation from \*) For this footnote see the next page NB.

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a social and economic pattern which would not allow it to survive. But I think the crux of my inability to ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ go along with you as so many fellows have is my failure to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

My way of life a sort of Mecklinian myth \*\*) is  
\*\*) Professor Mecklin taught a course in sociology at Dartmouth College on social myths and their power.  
built around a belief in "God is the people". And as you well know army life certainly can put an idea like that to the test.

The uniform, the soldiering, and even the ETO ribbon I'm entitled to wear are enough to satisfy society and my friends that I "belonged". But in my heart I know that during this whole lousy business I fumed, rotted, and killed time. I who talked so much of

what should be done and cheered when others went out and did it, am a glorified grease monkey living in comparative comfort and absolute safety. So, I was drafted. This is my life, my only life. I cannot accept being drafted as a worker when men must be soldiers. In the final analysis it was my fault. So many things I might have done. But after one blind albeit continuous stab to fly for the Navy I drifted like my whole generation afraid to jump into the stream. I wanted to be a big guy doing something important. I failed to integrate theory and practice and now I'm caught in my own trap.

But it is not all bad. After soldiering a year I'm still a buck private and have little chance of being made a non-com. I like to think that is because I refused to compromise ideals I believe in strongly. Have never applied for Officer Candidate School which I should be able to make with little trouble. Firstly I wanted to get overseas. But beyond that I thought of much you have said. Is it not essential that some of the men who help rebuild America and the world be men of the ranks? Men who have known the boredom and intellectual indecency of this existence? Being ordered about by those one cannot respect as men or as soldiers is tough yet a fellow learns an essential humility in dealing with others. The army as I have known it lacked the groupness, the oneness that you captured with Camp William James and we in a smaller sense found in our Coop. \*)

The officer, aporn leader, had run a coop. eating club while in college.

*Impulsive*

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Footnote to page 2 \*\*)

Camp William James was established following a petition of 325 citizen of Vermont at a rally in Tunbridge September 25, 1940, by order of the President of the United States. It was meant to serve as a leadership training center for a remodelled Civil Conservation Corps . Graduates from Harvard and Dartmouth, Vassar, and Skidmore and other Colleges as well as farm boys and members of CCC camps participated. The family of William James gave permission to use their father's name since we accepted his dictum:

" So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent is organized, I believe that war must have its way." Accordingly, when war came , all the members joined the armed forces or related activities. Having had to wait thirty years after William James' death, we had been too late, for once. Further discussion on pages 160ff. and on pages 216 ff.

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I shudder <sup>to</sup> ~~and~~ think how many would quit and go home if they ~~can~~ could. But yet it would be a far stronger army. I have yet to talk seriously with men who have seen action. I wonder if feelings of groupness and purposeness develop.

Men have yet to understand this war. Many see reason for war with Japan but not with Germany. The feeling that we are altruistically helping the English is common. They only want to go back to well paying jobs they are so confident are going to be there.

Seeing England at this time is an experience of first-rate magnitude. There is <sup>a</sup> determination to win and a quiet acceptance of the rigor of war that is wonderful albeit lost on the average of my comrades who rate American dollars as far more important than British and Russian lives in the winning of the war. You <sup>of</sup> told me the destiny of History coming to America when Lincoln entered Richmond. I wonder if it returned to Europe with ~~the~~ the courage of London? And does not the Red Revolution finally reach maturity and purge itself of the sins it has committed with the battle of Stalingrad?

I have been thinking a great deal of where I shall find my place after the war. Law School seems impossible. After being so completely a follower I want to be able to step out as a leader at least in the sense of a train <sup>blazer</sup> blazer. I have a

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desire to see the world not as a tourist but as a worker and fighter. For we know that this is only a war in the course of a world revolution which it seems will claim the efforts of all of us for years if not for life.

What , Sir, would you like to see me, Alan, Dick and the rest of us do ? .....

Sincerely

Irving

September 15, 1943

Dear Irving,

Your letter left me badly shaken. It was full of power; it was your first letter to me. How shall I give to my answer all the overtones and keys which would fill it with the same volume?

It is true that in many ways I was groomed to answer your question. The very day that your letter had come, a boy of the Naval Unit here asked: why is Christianity not a myth like any other? And on innumerable occasions as you well know similar questions were put and answers were finally condensed into the manuscript "The Future of <sup>Christianity</sup> ~~Christianity~~". Yet, the limitations of my powers became painfully clear to me when I tried to envisage your situation and now try to speak actually to you and not in generalities.

Perhaps, one way of bridging the abyss is that I should match your myth: "God is the People," by the myth of my own century. Any generation is born into the myth of its time; I agree with you, on the irresistible "e'lan" of the myth. What swayed us off our feet?

We grew up as the last generation before the First World War; hence we were spellbound by the doctrines of Emerson and Goethe. "Give all to love....." He who loves, .... "mounts to paradise by the stairway of surprise." "Love is a God"..... "When half-gods go, the gods arrive." You see there was plenty of mythology in this enlightened century. Worldly love to woman was exalted and made comprehensive so that free enterprise, to me at least, was only a



wrapping around the real incentive. This incentive was to gather crowns and victories and money for being able to throw them down at the feet of one's sweetheart. "Give all for love," aye, "Rob all for your love." When Karl Schurz became Senator, he, ~~the~~ foreign-born and barely forty years of age, ~~he~~ asked his wife if she would receive this as his best gift; and was this pearl to her liking? The natural revelation that God is in the relations of the hearts of men and women, that he is in all the forms by which sensation is sanctified, held such a spell as to be difficult to convey to you since the shadows of its heyday have lengthened by now, considerably.

The voice by which the sexes are drawn together, seemed to contain the answer to all problems in a way similar to the conviction of your times that the masses are the instruments of God.

This our natural religion led many, in Europe more than here to the belief that the genius, the erotic fire, which draws Adam to Eve, also is creative in art and science and politics. The burning fire of love was not an affair between private individuals in their leisure time; it took the place of the central myth. All other relations of our life in the world appeared in this light, as mere emanations of our courtship. We courted the world because we courted women.

As every myth, ours asked for ~~he~~<sup>c</sup>katombs of lives. It cannot be called an accident that Maupassant and Lenin, Lassalle and Heinrich Heine succumbed to Syphilis. The perversions of Swinburne and Gide and the Sodom and Gomorrha of Proust showed the reverse of the medal. ~~That~~ Clint ~~Candace~~<sup>40 year old</sup>, an innocent First Lieutenant in the ~~antiaircraft~~, gives talks to his men on the dangers from venereal

diseases, now, ~~it~~ is a healthy symptom though a queer one, that we ~~have~~ ~~are~~ passed the days when these abominations dominated a helpless humanity, like a merciless Moloch whose name could not be uttered.

But do not overlook the grandeur of our era when Disraeli could court England and the Tories, in his novels as well as in his speeches, could court Queen Victoria, as Gambetta courted France, and every American the Presidency. You may now rationalize and psychologize and psychoanalyze our myth. But you are its heirs. Consider the following two facts from the eighteenth century. George Washington still considered a love match as something beneath his dignity. In Germany, a nobleman and famous writer, who happened to be ardently in love with his fiancée, insisted as late as 1791, in his letters to her, that they should keep up the appearances of an arranged match, and speak of their marriage as a wisely premeditated family business. To marry for love, is a myth barely 150 years old. Before, marriage had been a family affair as you still can see it handled among royalty. We have conquered for you the freedom that the family cannot interfere with your choice.

We were shipwrecked in many ways. For, no myth is more than temporal. The myth which seems so natural to the living, for ~~this~~ very reason is transient.

Yours no longer is a primarily courting generation. The tension is lessened by many in-between stages. Petting is one of them. Coeducation and early marriage and birth control and salvarsan, have eliminated both, the heights of divine love, and the despair of the animal, and the absolute risks of our courtship of the Dame World are now down to the level on which one might take out insurance

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against them, so to speak. Divorce is a kind of limitation of risk. The myth dies when the risk loses the character of being absolute. The sexes try to meet on an empirical and manageable basis.

I do not complain at all that my myth should no longer prevail. The cry "God is genius," "God is art," "God is creativity," was shown up in these last forty years as not comprehensive enough. Before going into that, let me only say that the rays from my mythical sun have reached you from hearsay only. Don't think of it only in the ghastly visions of the mad artist. Those who served faithfully, cleansed and purified the myth into the eternal truth that God is marriage. The Frenchman Guizot, a leader of 1830, historian and statesman of the juste-milieu gave a good solution in his book title "L'amour dans le mariage". "God is marriage" is an eternal truth and created a loveable world. In its sublime solutions, the myth served as a gateway into the fuller life, and childhood and death, friendships of the most precious devotion, education and skills, flourished under this magic wand. The most positive creations of the 19th century sprang from its cult of Eros. Born within the encircling gloom of the love-myth, we could yet get beyond it by taking it as a messenger, instead of mistaking it as the source of all truth.

At the end of World War One our myth exploded. When I confessed to this, I entitled the book "The Marriage of War and Revolution." In this book, my love myth of pre-war days was confronted with your myth of the Masses. Each, it seemed to me, imparted some blessing to the other. For instance, the courted "bride" of a man's heart now became visible as the hard working "daughter of Man," also.

Your generation learned to see behind the pretty body which the adolescent craves, the working woman. To you, this does not appear stunning. To us, it came as a shock. Goethe, the prophet of the 20th century, wrestled all his life with the incongruity or the mystery that a father's Daughter in whom we respect the father's soul, and the Bride who compels us as Venus, should be one and the same being. Prophetically, he postulated their ultimate oneness. The natural daughter would reconcile the classes and give peace to society.

In America, the equation between the courted bride and the revered daughter of God is not functioning well. You see many men whose selective power is nil, who simply are married by some energetic woman. Love is the power of selection, the power to stamp one constellation with the character of uniqueness. And it is rare that the modern American boy has the heart for this very act. "They may break down because they have run too fast and too hard instead of using their heart in the way it is meant to be used, for loving," a navy officer wrote to me in diagnosing the prospects of this country.

## II.

To come back to the real break between the generations:

~~while I wrote The Marriage of War and Revolution, with the chapter~~  
~~on the Daughter,~~ <sup>soon</sup> I was confronted by the Russian Revolution and the Marxian myth of mass-action as the panacea for the real evils of society. ~~In other words, whereas I tried to enlarge the vision of Creative Genius so that it might include its very opposite, your times were in the ascendancy in which productive mass action was~~

~~celebrated as the redeeming force.~~

The inevitable transition from my "myth" to another, had been my experience ever since 1905 when I first talked to a genuine Russian Revolutionary. ~~The social gospel had always been in sight, after that. And now I not only capped The Marriage of War and Revolution by an essay on "Cooperative Fellowship." I also decided to pay my respects to the new myth. I entered a factory, and gave five years, from 1918 to 1923, to the factory and labor problems. I abandoned the place which I loved most, the chair of scholarship, because it lay obviously too exclusively in the magic square of Platonic Eros and academic myth, inside the German university. I worked for the decentralization of industry, the education of union leaders, work camps, etc. instead.~~

~~However, I no longer could center in my myth nor in your myth, nor in anybody's myth. And there are not only the temporary myths of politics. We also have our professional myth as I shall have to explain further on. My reaction to the thirteen years 1905-1918, was primarily that all myths became second rate. I now searched for the relation of these indispensable myths to the whole of life. The myths as phases is the topic of "Out of Revolution". And their wise handling seemed to me the only human attitude towards them.~~

Hence, I was compelled to restrain the new myth just as much as the old.\* ~~I had given up my academic career because it was tainted by the~~

~~\*) see footnote on next page  
19th century myth; I also lost my place at the head of The Academy of Labor, as a "reactionary". It was natural that the hundred per-  
centers of either mythology smelled the rat, scented and resented my  
conditional allegiance to their cause.~~

You may well ask for some proof that this is not an afterthought. Hence, the following sentences from "The Marriage of War and Revolution", written in 1919, may serve (p. 243 ff.):

"In the decades ahead of us, <sup>revenge</sup> many Germans will be driven by sheer anguish to ~~revenge~~, rebellion, restorations. We shall pass through attempts of a pseudo emperor and Germany will be transformed into a hell, by these forces.

We, however, must bear willingly the double curse laid upon us by the 19th century mythology and by that of the 20th century. Both, nationalism as well as socialism, have lost their majesty, for us. For, as nationalism has no longer the future, and therefore sees even its past achievements turn into mere spectres, so does socialism ignore the past and thereby turns its future into a sunless day of mechanisms. We shall be expelled by both.

Nevertheless, since the very meaning of human history is at stake, we can't help serving as the faithful piece of cable by which ~~the~~ yesterday remains connected with tomorrow, despite the cleavage."

The ultimate expression of this restraint is the wall erected between you and me, in the dogma of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

I often try to forget that it is such a great divide. However, I can't do anything about it. Your own myth would catch its form of disease and would degenerate, precisely as the love cult of the 19th century, if it was unwilling to be restrained by reference to the Christian Era.

At first sight, this may seem pure nonsense or a reactionary trick by which necessary reforms are delayed. What has mass action by which to fight unemployment or erosion, to do with the little Jew in Palestine 1900 years ago? The cure for your myth can hardly be expected from a man whose people produced Marx and Trotsky.

~~I have no illusions. It seems useless to stop Marx by Jesus. The latter is an individual.~~ The battalions of some "dawn" as shown in the first of the Orozco Murals, march to their destiny without conscious leadership, trusting their instincts. "The God who is the people" is like the seven seas, like a cornfield in a storm, and words cannot stop him. No sermon on the mount for the new masses. It makes little difference if the social gospel is ~~the~~ Russian communism or ~~the~~ Nazi Socialism or fascism, or the New Deal. ~~I saw one of our friends get intoxicated by communism.~~ With most Americans, the intoxication is ~~much~~ milder. It is called the war effort. Under this banner, the indispensable readjustment of America is carried out, with a minimum of illusions or mythology. ~~The war effort, which~~

~~At this juncture, the war effort is our world, our social "flesh". saves the United States from frustration, does not satisfy your craving for real electricity, real enthusiasm and it comes so soberly. Does the "war effort" excuse, explain, interpret, every decision and every act, for the duration? Can we simply acquiesce in it?~~

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His god is sex. And that prevents him from self-realization. Real life leads to marriage. In this case, the myth leads out of itself, into "real" life. Here, we have to live with our in-laws and with our children. The "in-laws" are quite a case in point. They see the bride as a member of their family where the passion of sex is absent. The myth of the nineteenth century saw in the mistress the deities of love, and all degrees can be found in its poems, from Venus to Mary, and from Cretchen to Astarte. But to her family, the daughter will be Diana or Athene, or Terpsichore. The clash between the in-laws and the bridegroom may become painful because the elements of two different "myths" clash.

The same clash rages in this country now between "my" myth of free enterprise (and courtship is its most intensified expression) and your "myth". We have different "Second Natures". Different words are on our lips day and night, different waves flow through our veins. ~~Where are we to meet?~~

### III.

Let me approach the same question mark on an even more day-to-day basis. Ten soldiers grouse in their barracks. There is that swine of the barracks among them who drives the decent majority crazy. He chuckles at all the <sup>belching and</sup> ~~snorting~~, farting, ~~shitting~~, of our animal body. His jokes and stories are detested and yet undergone by his helpless comrades. Why?

The swine grunts. He lives beneath even the contemporary myth of the common cause. He does share neither the illusions nor the heroisms of the myth. He is a non-conformist, but alas in the



sense only that no myth whatsoever holds any spellbinding power over him. He puts in the place of your collective decency his individual indecency. He swears and he curses. And how he drinks. Dan came on furlough quite anxious to be sober for one week, again. Why did he drink? Because of that swine of the barracks.

At this point, the lack of an established clergy of which you servants of your myth rightly pride yourselves ceases to be an advantage. The myth of the masses depended on your unshakable faith that all its members were part of an irresistible mission. Whether this is the United States army or the proletariat or "Youth," makes no difference in this respect. It was because of the irresistible magnetism that you declined to think in terms of a police force or a *dogma* or a pope for your myth: "God is the people." That swine of the barracks, however, is outside your circuit. Your electricity sends no spark into him. If you should happen to march him to victory, he would concentrate on the loot and spoils.

We are silenced the very moment anybody proves immune against our myth, in our barracks. And we twist our faces as we do when we have toothache. Those were my worst hours in the army.

We are forced to recognize two levels, one conformist and mythical, the other below. If you admit the existence of the two levels, we are able to look together for a third level on which you and I may meet despite our different "second natures," in overcoming the swine.

In resisting the swine, we need an authority which the pure myth does not grant us. What gives you the authority and the good conscience to tell a man: Be silent, under the applause of the

bystanders? How do we convince? We shall have success when we can make them perceive that we do not speak arbitrarily like the swine, but in the name of some real power. The truth which you utter ceases to be an empty phrase not because it is clever but because the listener feels that it is represented to them by you. It reaches them not from you, but through you. In the name of the scientific method, one absent minded professor is able to discipline hundreds of students, without any obstruction on their part.

The officer who represents the established authority of his government, sees ten thousands respond to his order. And if you make the appeal in the name of decency, or patriotism, or duty, or common sense, you always "re-present," <sup>that is,</sup> ~~id est~~ you make present an authority hitherto absent and now drawn into the room by your speaking, in its name. When one man grouses usually the others gripe. Only when one man ceases to grouse and lends his body to be the carrier of a power whose delegate he chooses to be, does he rise to the occasion and is seen to speak from the platform of authority. Do not <sup>think the words which</sup> ~~compare that which~~ the boys <sup>use are the important thing,</sup> ~~say~~. Observe on which level they speak. And you will <sup>discern</sup> ~~know~~ that the establishment of the higher platform, the speaking "in the name of..." is what matters in life, and very little\* what we actually say. The same word: "Be silent," may come from the pig who likes a squabble, from the tired comrade who wants to go to sleep, and from the insulted human being who wishes to weed out this kind of <sup>it.</sup> ~~stuff.~~

But who knows of this "speaking in the name of.."? ~~Most men are living their second natures, as mere contemporaries, and cannot tame the beast as their own talk is regurgitation. The decent boys~~

did not help Dan to resist the constant influence of liquor. But real people in his new home showed him as he wrote to me, their appreciation. They recognized him as one of them, and in the name of Tunbridge, he became a person, once more. He could slay the dragon, not through any enigmatic formula of magic, but in the name in which we all conquer the devil, in the name of a fellowship of real persons who recognize us, by their love.

For, a real person has his head beyond the cloud of his own myth. Having his haven in the fellowship of the cloud of witnesses he can tread the serpent of swinishness under foot. A mere contemporary would be a man who has "acquaintances" only, and cannot speak in the name of a staff, of a fellowship which has vowed to slay the beast. Any person speaks in the name of higher powers; while a contemporary talks in the second nature of his myth. The swine swears from his own vapors. Person, contemporary, swine, are in every human being. The average American boy is so good natured that he easily may be excused for forgetting the third stage. For this reason that any <sup>well</sup> integrated society tries to forget its <sup>Pitfalls</sup> the tripartition is an eternal truth, and that means, it is a dogma. Because modern man had forgotten this, Hitler was able to revivify archaic paganisms which his opponents thought to be non-existent. <sup>to you</sup> The dogma stood between us. You realized that I tried not to speak in my own name. Behind the dogma of the divinity of the guarantor of our humanity, lies this simple fact that I did not try to sell my myth and I did not accept your myth, either. We traded on a higher plane. This plane on which we swap myths, survive our generation, shed our second natures, was created at a certain historical moment. Any historical creation is in constant danger of being forgotten, of becoming purely historical. Hence, the tenacity

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with which his name is attacked as well as defended, in every generation. His name stands for the sacrifice of every generation's myth. ~~Since he was a man like we, ourselves, he showed us how to sacrifice the myth of our own generation. In doing so, he irritated those who were swayed by their myths, helplessly; they never had heard of the existence of a higher plane, in the same way as the convinced Communist of the thirties believed in the party line even though it changed abruptly every half year.~~ In order to understand the world which Jesus tried to redeem, the Gentiles, the party line Communists, offer you a perfect example. They scoffed at any level beyond or below <sup>(their myth)</sup>; they denied the existence of any reality except the Jesus harnessed all ~~these~~ myths, Greek, Germanic, Egyptian; party mentality. ~~Jesus~~, on the other hand, <sup>he</sup> scandalized the one non-mythical people of the ancient world, the Jews. They had drawn a line between themselves and the Gentiles, had fenced themselves off from the secular myths of Greeks and Egyptians. And they considered it a sacrilege to ascribe any validity to any myth. Jesus ceased to be a Jew and did not become a Gentile. He the Christ was the first Christian. Between mythological life, and anti-mythological revelation, Jesus had to discover a way out. The myth had to receive its due, and, at the same time, it had to be put on a secondary plane. As second rate, <sup>and should</sup> it did exist. The confusion under which the world decayed, came from its asking first seat.

Jesus chose to defy the myth which well sums up all the myths of all times. (And antiquity thought and lived all possible philosophies and myths; its inventory in this respect is complete). Israel, in order to escape from any specific myth of Baal and Dionysos, and Zeus and Osiris and Kybele and Odin, had summed them all up in the messianic complex. Does not every myth consider

itself a messiah? Does it not always pose as the panacea? The myth is human; Israel denied itself the present myths; the messianic myth is their compensation at the end of time. It never must happen, but it is desired. Jesus was tempted by the messiah complex first in the form

of "God is the people." "Feed the millions," was the Marxian myth put before him by the tempter in the desert. He was tempted by the scientific myth which gave me much trouble: Know everything. Research, science, truth for truth's sake. Writing the greatest of books. And he was tempted to take over the political government as world president, which is the myth of power, once more.

He did not write the great book. He did not start a struggle for power. He did not exterminate the social evil. He barely did enough of healing, teaching, and feeding to make it abundantly clear that he could have chosen to tackle these problems. He did not have to act as the fox with the sour grapes. It was neither impotency nor ignorance nor lack of political forcefulness which prevented him from choosing these lines of action. This was necessary to establish his own level as a plane not below but above the myth and the anti-myth. Once he had established this evidence beyond a doubt, he went to the Cross and gave back <sup>his</sup> the spirit into the hands of his father. Thereby, he created the solidarity of mankind, beyond all individual power. That this is the true story, appears from the fact that the apostle Paul never cared for the sayings of Jesus during his life. He nearly never quoted him. Paul, having received the new freedom of non-mythical communion, from the first man who had walked on this plane of absolute solidarity of all times and spaces of man, showed by not quoting him that he was communing with Jesus above a myth. He lived with him in the absolute freedom from indoctrination. From this fellowship, he and the other apostles derived their power to manipulate their times. They had ceased to be mere contemporaries. Anybody who feels that every myth breeds its

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"syphilis" if it is not overcome by free persons, speaks in the same unambiguous name, after that. Because, ~~this~~ third level gets mixed up with the animal level and the mythical level, if we do not represent, if we do not bring back into our time, this same unambiguous cross. To the mythologists it sounds ridiculous, and to the decent people, it comes as an impious scandal. And I am perfectly willing to admit that I very deeply ~~can~~ feel the ridicule and the scandal myself, often.

For, we all are Gentiles or Jews, alternately. Nobody is a Christian all the time. Yet, it remains true that the monopoly of the myth was broken. The passion of Jesus introduced the first "above-myth" life, into the world of the Gentiles; he <sup>at the same time</sup> ~~broke away~~ from the sterile negation of the myth, by the Jews, by taking upon himself the one myth which could not be repeated and should not be repeated, ever, the messianic myth. The cross was his way out of the conflict which the creation of a new human standard entailed. If you allow me to express it in my terms, he made the new faith the result of a marriage between two ways of existence which, before, had been built up as eternal enemies, of the Greek welter of myth and the Jewish puritanism. This marriage made him appear a sinner to the one anti-mythical people of the whole world.

Ever since, the new fellowship <sup>has been</sup> ~~was~~ available as an arsenal against the swine of the barracks. That is to say, any army fighting for a cause, whether national or revolutionary, could chastize its members under the condition that it also chastized its myth and admitted it to be a temporal and second-rate business. Professor Mecklin could talk to you of the "myth" because he himself was a

person. And he spoke from a haven which lies beyond the ~~clouds~~ <sup>world of the</sup> ~~clouds~~ <sup>EXOR</sup>  
 "flesh". And the flesh, in the Bible, is the myth!  
 He imparted to you the power which made you state your own myth in human terms, and not as a fanatic, in your letter.

VE.

~~You may~~ If you have followed this tortuous path patiently, you may rightly exclaim: It was so easy for you to shed your skin; your myth was on the wane ever after 1905; even Henry Adams could see that the acceleration by your myth led to a breakdown. But our myth is young. It's waxing daily. It would be felony not to promote it, in so conservative a country as this.

This would impress me, if the atrocities of every myth were not especially cruel and flagrant in its first hours. Cromwell, Marat, Hitler, disillusioned their followers quickly. This enabled you to speak of the "sins of the Russian Revolution," in your letter. "Revolution I can make with swines only," Hitler reportedly said. This repelled you sufficiently so that you and I meet on a plane beyond our myths. For, when you spoke of the "God-is-the-people"-myth being purified in the battle of Stalingrad, you adopted the Christian nomenclature. And so we need not be argumentative about the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is a dogma for those only who still put their myth on the same level with him. The dogma would cease to be a moot question if there would exist no people who veiled themselves in their myth. For, to those who have buried their myth, he becomes the first born brother. Then, the dogma has done its work; you may forget about it, as long as no earthly second nature is apt to seduce you, again.

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But all knees shall bow before him who made us live up to our true and divine nature. The temporal slogans possess us long before we understand the workings of the source from which they all emanate. That which impresses us first, is the second nature, "the myth." That which is first rate, the life "beyond the veil," we discover secondarily.

The crucial order is, child  
contemporary  
man of suffering  
founder.

The vulgar sequence is, individual  
mythical contemporary  
conqueror  
fanatic.

His life is so palpable that it is enough to remember it when we are in danger of missing our road to fulfilment. ~~Since he created my nature when I would have missed it, I personally know that he shares the quality of divinity with my creator.~~

## VII.

And yet, the sign posts of your era are undoubtedly difficult to decipher. The labels Jew, Greek, Christian, have ceased to suffice. The everyday American, if he thinks at all, thinks that there are only Jews and Gentiles. I know of very few people who actually know that we live in a world of mythologists, anti-mythologists, and of a third people who redeem the myth by putting ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> where ~~it~~ belongs in the plan of creation.

The tripartition of mankind, for 1900 years, was into these three creeds; the backstage secret of this world revolution as produced by the two world wars is ~~that~~ <sup>T</sup> that we all may be at times in, and at times out of the myth, and at times, we have to fulfil it. We,



You are in danger of missing your road to fulfilment.

This greatest danger will come in the hour when you return home. The physical danger may be greatest on the battlefield. But in <sup>commuting</sup> ~~commuting~~ coming home from overseas, the soldiers of this war will be in the greatest dangers of their lives. Certainly, it is an evil to lie shot dead on the ground. To live on dead for the rest of your life, is a less gruesome sight but a more horrid event.

Why should this danger be particularly pressing? A simile ~~which~~ ~~we used in Camp William James (see above pages 160ff.)~~ may explain. As we commute from our suburbs to our offices in the city, we soon realize that neither our suburban companions nor our downtown collaborators share our whole life. And so, we actually retire into our best self on the highway between office and home. On the highway, the soul may mutter and all her fears, hopes, desires, are right there. If you wish to meet the real man, use television and catch him when he commutes on the road. So much for peacetimes.

The even greater truth is that the real man is found "between" war and peace; <sup>or the folks home not</sup> neither your comrades in arms know you fully. For your background and your future are cloaked under the exigencies of this moment. ~~Even the man who is killed in action, comes to life in the victory, in the outcome of the war only.~~ And at home, the people do not share the uniformity of your army life. Hence, you meet both, family and comrades, with a fraction of yourself. And your real self, because it does not move in a fellowship of its own, disintegrates.

Everything will conspire to keep this your real self inarticulate. First of all, the soldiers who go from war to peace, will be in a hurry as all commuters are. ~~How few can take their going and returning~~

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a hurry as all commuters are. How few will take their returning leisurely? And out of this minority, how few will think that leisure is not enough?

Secondly, everything back home is prepared for you magnificently in redistribution centers. The boys who return will be received by a paternal government and a motherly society. Every class of veterans from flier to minister is going to be groomed and retrained. War is to be over as soon as possible: War yesterday, peace tomorrow.

As you must know, the chorus of post-war planners is swelling. Look at the term, "post-war". To me it has somewhat the ring of "post-mortem". But I seem to be alone in this predicament. Let me state it as best <sup>as</sup> I can. N.

A decent person lives this war as an "out-of-his-peace-" war. Your letter is evidence of this: You did not choose to go to OCS because of your peacetime convictions \* by the way, you cannot make this a principle, I think-; your peacetime self made you understand the British, and appreciate the significance of Stalingrad, etc. etc. Hence, the opposite should hold true, too: The life which a soldier should try to live after his war is over, should <sup>be become an</sup> ~~be an~~ "out-of-this-war" life.

How can this be, however, if all the soldiers are <sup>that is,</sup> ~~herded~~ into post-mortem, ~~excuse me~~ into postwar organisations, and if the whole purpose of these organisations as they are planned now, consists in "mass action and materialism" as you describe your former myth yourself?

This postwar society will start one day and the doors of war will be closed with a bang. In their irony, they <sup>have gone</sup> ~~went~~ so far <sup>as</sup> to print a book

called "Creative Demobilisation" in which the homecoming soldiers and their experiences during the war are not even mentioned, let alone made the mainspring of "creativity". The whole country is "improved" in this book, on innumerable maps. And the soldiers are the "material" for it.

Hence, it is imperative that you should delay your demobilization. Or the war will be wasted on mankind, once more. Do not hurry. Your hurry cannot help landing you in one of the many grooves made for you by others who could not profit from your own real experience as up to date. At the end of the last ~~day~~, <sup>important tasks</sup> November 8th, 1918, I had three ~~jobs~~ <sup>more influential</sup> offered me, every one of them incomparably better <sup>done</sup> (than what I had ~~before~~ the war. The real place for me came six months later <sup>out</sup> of ~~the~~ wartime fellowship and out of war time needs. Those six months of arduous waiting <sup>were of infinite value to</sup> made me. But I had to turn down three big somethings for actually nothing <sup>because they antedated my new being, by their pre-war frame of reference.</sup>

Stop on the highway between war and peace. In the title of Tolstoj's great epic "War and Peace", the "and" is usually overlooked. This, however, was not a novel on war or on peace, or on both. It <sup>was</sup> a book on the hinge between war and peace. <sup>Then</sup> Look into the magazines which have the stories about war or peace made to order, in every issue: so many on peace time topics, so many on war. <sup>Then</sup> you know that we live en masse.

The more you may expect that a mere postwar society will take hold of the masses, the more you will have to consider yourself ~~to be~~ responsible for forming a group out of this war. In this, you have the significant difference between mass and group. You are required to pull up out of this war as against mere demobilized, post war masses.

A mass lives from one place to the next, from dormitory to classroom, from subway to factory, to movie, to the stadium, to the barracks etc. etc. In every one of these places, we conform. The army is your ready-made environment right now. I had a letter somewhere in the Mediterranean from a member of the Lehmann Committee where the ready made environment of this staff in the midst of warring nations is described. They ~~in no~~ <sup>do not in any</sup> way live with the people or with the war. They could just as well be in Washington, D. C. In the midst of a world in turmoil, they continue to live on the American plan. This ~~and~~ is as startling as the description of the British behavior on the Yangtze a century ago. There, the steamships used to override and drown mercilessly any Chinese boat which crossed <sup>To them,</sup> the Chinese did not exist, Pumpelly wrote of the British. their paths. So much could the British live in their own separate environment, in the midst of God's one world. The mass man in ourselves does this very thing twenty times a day. In every one

of the environments through which we pass, we conform. Strongwilled persons like yourself, may pick out one or the other of these particles and reform them. But, ~~we~~<sup>man</sup>, human beings are not formed this way; they are broken up. They become like noses of wax, twisted one way or the other according to the occasion.

A group permeates any space through which it passes, with one spirit. It is not conquered by its environment. It conquers its environment.

IN a group, time is taken out for the man as a whole, so that he can think up to his real and latest experiences and has not to escape on the road of "commuting," ~~with~~<sup>for</sup> them. I gather from your letter that you still are cramped by dated pre-war ideas because the newer war-borne ones cannot come forth without fellowship.

The pre-war ideas will not help you nor any one else as long as you do not penetrate to your last and freshest experiences of thought as well as action. These are so numberless that without a sabbatical year, you cannot ~~not~~ hope to harvest them. Before you can allow yourself any decision, you must live it out with others, officers as well as men, who share your courage of stopping when everybody else runs.

Mr. Everybody murders his most valuable experience, the one on which he should base his future decisions. But there is a postwar society waiting for him, and he will conform.

The communal myth of the 20th century will never be redeemed unless groups are formed through taking out time together and articulating in this slowdown that which the accelerated masses forget from one day to the other. He who overcomes the great temptation of his time, shall lead it. The great temptation is hurry.

The men in a group are not morally better men than masses. Heaven knows that we are all ordinary people. But in a group, we live on a more appropriate wave length; and we have an infinite amount of time. We experience time as indefinite, as lasting as long as is necessary. Any event should never have the length of the preplanning mind, but its own length which never is known beforehand. Most people never live through an experience which is allowed to have its own timespan. And thus, most peace time experiences are too short. They are like survey courses in college, spoiling your appetite for ever.

The first world war was lost because no bridge led from war to peace. In England, Hanbury-Sparrow could call the generation of Flanders "the landlocked lake". War was forgotten. This time, the danger comes from the opposite corner: post-war peace will be preplanned.

For the human being, such a peace will be equally bad. From this kind of planning, leadership differs. Planners improve other people's living conditions. Leaders stay among the guineapigs as one of them; they do not wish to improve others, but to sublimate common sufferings. Planning is mechanical; leadership is personal.

The groups of fellows who will overcome their most natural desire of rushing home will be the ones who shall master the mass myth. They, in their groups, shall sprinkle the myth with the waters of real experience.

All the rationalists, the sound people, will prove to you that this is wrong because if everybody would do it, no order could be kept during the demobilisation. And you will be tempted once more by your preference for mass action. It is quite true that this choice is not for everybody. If this is a valid counterargument, in your eyes, rush home with the others. Leadership, however, consists in freedom from the very urge which the leader is ready to satisfy in his fellow men. A leader slows down when others are ~~rushed~~ ~~are~~ rushed. Who redeemed the hustle and bustle of free enterprise, *in the 19th century,* ~~in the hustle and bustle of free enterprise~~ and how did they do it?

It was done by the creative artists who forewent the opportunity of making money quick<sup>ly</sup>. They stayed behind, exploring one individual experience fully. For this privilege, they suffered voluntarily solitude. Usually, *creative geniuses* ~~he~~ <sup>for</sup> was in the dark for a long time, since where others rushed on indifferently, he saw a difference. Think of Melville's power to see the difference when others simply abandoned whaling. He did not give in before this difference found expression through him. The slowing down of the artist redeemed the acceleration of the Liberal era.

The leading group's distinct contribution consists in this; while they share the experience of the masses, they, in addition, take time out to think up to these experiences.

For a reformer, this is a hard doctrine; you like to live up to your ideals. You are a humanist, I am not. As a soldier, you should understand me. The best a man's mind can do, is to think up to the tremendous experience of living. He who does this, with fresh eyes, qualifies as leader.

The very specific leadership of your generation is that not the individual but groups alone are able to harvest the experiences this time.

The obvious reason for this is that the family, the neighborhood, the town, and everyone of the 48 states has the cancer, the disintegration of cells inherent <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ the ~~economic~~ <sup>industrial</sup> system. Because of this cancer, a purely post-mortem society, mechanically planned, will result if you do not care enough for an "Out-of-this-war- Society."

In 1917, the American soldiers would sing:

"We do not quite know what this war is all about;  
But you may be sure we shall soon find out. "

That, in itself, was not bad; no soldier ever knew much of the issue in any war. That you observe this fact again, right now, should not depress you. Share this common darkness wholeheartedly. It is the beginning of wisdom.