

Today's All Saints (1986), which is about nothing except fighting off forgetting the saints & thus neglecting to bless God for them (as the hymn "For all the saints...Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest"). Sunup this morning was victory over last night's dark powers (Hallowe'en). Always and everywhere, saints are in the biggest business: as the angels (as it were) hold the sky up, the saints save society from sagging into entropic selfishness. They are the stateswo/men of the spirit. They supply, to use a great phrase from Whitehead's work on education, "the habitual vision of greatness." They define, from the angle of aspiration, what it means to be a human being.

1. This morning I hit upon a strange synchronicity. I'm virtually certain that 52 years ago I didn't know it was All Saints' Day, yet I wrote this in my outer-life diary: "Spiritual relationship is beginning to surpass both mind and body." Approaching age 69, I need at least 1 more century to become a saint; but at age 16 I unwittingly defined "saint": somebody for whom spirit, in contrast to both body and mind, holds centerstage. (NB: I did not say "in opposition to," though some saints have overdone it and become antimaterial and anti-intellectual. At age 16 I was very much physical, avg. 3-4 hours per day on physical sports, not counting physical work; and I was delightfully in my head, mental, as I've been ever since.) That was in my outer-life diary of 1934 and is unusual there: I'd have thought it would've been in my inner-life diary for today 1934, which has this: "My morning prayer is beginning to be a real comfort to me. I feel that I am daily being drawn closer to Christ." That diary I read and annotated the next year, and here's the 1935 annotation (reflecting rapid spiritual development age 16-17): "The Lord guided even when I had so little light!" I'd long intended to be a research chemist: mind over matter. I was now modulating into the ministry: spirit over both matter and mind (though of course not all "saints," in my modest and accurate definition, earn their living off religion).

2. Monday I got to preach-teach from the desk of the church whose congregation (such as were physically able) came over on the Mayflower, 1620--the Scrooby desk, in the museum of Congregational House, Boston. (I was speaking to the Winthrop Club, named for the founder of "the Bible Commonwealth" to the north of Plymouth Colony, viz MA Bay Colony--Congregational ministers meeting for lunch Monday mornings for the past 125 years.) America's "All Saints" include Pastor Jn. Robinson & Elder Wm. Brewster, who both had used this desk (which I'd requested I be permitted to use, a request granted though "unusual"). Here on "Cap-Codd" (the sp. in the Mayflower Compact) the Scrooby congregation, after a stay in Holland, was--by permission of Jas.I--free to live as a community of Separatists from the Church of Eng. In Scrooby in 1604 they'd formed themselves into a church; but three years later, because "hunted & persecuted on every side" by the Conformists and called "schismatics" by the nonseparating Puritans, they escaped to Holland, where "influenced doubtless by the large-spirited Robinson, their temper moderated to a much more charitable form of Separatism than many had previously shown" (137, S.E.Ahlstrom, A RELIG. HIST. OF THE AM. PEOPLE, Yale/72-3). I'm much of their spirit, and Jn. Robinson's Mayflower sermon, including "God hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His holy Word." "Heavy" in my spiritual formation.

3. Another political New World development: Deganawida, founder ^{OVER}

of the Iroquois League of Amerind nations, preached a message of memory maintenance and thus of spiritual formation: Intertribal warfare stemmed from spiritual amnesia: "The people had forgotten the Creator's ways" (82, JAAR, Spr/86). His first convert was Djigonsasa, the Mother of Nations, who'd been (as it were) running guns to everybody, supplying the war parties. He persuaded her to his "double-faceted principles--Righteousness, Peace, (spiritual) Power"--and her being the first convert is the etiological myth explaining why clan mothers have priority (83). The Pilgrim Fathers accused the Church of England of spiritual amnesia.... With all this backing, aboriginal and immigrant, how come American churches today are not accusing the public-school establishment of promoting spiritual amnesia, fighting (by neglect & deliberation) against the holy ones in our heritage (Moses, Jesus, the Pilgrim Fathers...)? This fighting against memory is a form of folly (as in Santayana's "condemned to repeat it") and a form of betrayal (as in Elie Wiesel's 1986 Nobel Peace Prize speech, "Anyone who does not remember (the Holocaust) betrays them again").

4. Parallel with psychology's "existential vacuum" (the doughnut-shaped soul) is sociology's "historical vacuum" (the doughnut-shaped culture, hollow-amnesiac in its center). Public-school chn. who can tell you about the PLO have never heard of the Mayflower Compact: "issues" have replaced history, as issue-literature has replaced the classics of West & East. "Nature abhors a vacuum," and "New Age" thinking-living is filling in the historical-spiritual vacuum created by public-school neglect (no use blaming the church: the kids aren't there; or the home: the kids aren't there, either).

5. Awareness, the dominant religious mode of the Eastern hemisphere, can be vacuous of history; and historical amnesia (in the West) correlates with (Eastern) mysticism. Easternism flooding over the West (yes, in the sense of top down, influencing first the West's most "advantaged") is frighteningly spelled out 29Sept86 NYT "Spiritual Concepts Drawing a Different Breed." "The New Age movement is essentially the maturing of the hippie movement of the 1960's." IBM, AT&T, GM execs are being trained in "how metaphysics, the occult and Hindu mysticism might help" them "compete in the world's marketplace." The supernatural, via Shirley MacLaine & other stars, is in. How natural for managers to cuddle up to mind control: they try to control everything else. "New Age thought...directly or indirectly rejects the Judeo-Christian concept of a single, omnipotent God Who has revealed His will to man." Instead they preach monism, the universe a unity "of which all things, including God and man, are equal parts....man himself is a deity who can 'create his own reality.'" Appearing as human-potential training in Life-spring, Insight, the Forum, and other programs, this managerial-religious movement is "the most powerful social force in the country today....a complete rejection of Judeo-Christian and bedrock American values." Alienation from the West's material as well as spiritual culture: the world's current eco-social systems are ravaging the planet. Faith, as in Luke Skywalker's "The Force is with you," in "an energy or force in the universe that will lead to a happy, peaceful, perhaps united new world." "The drug of the 80's is cosmic consciousness." Easternistic Pealism. No sin, no guilt. Correlation of monism and teamism (vs. pyramidism). Like the Glass Cathedral's "possibilities thinking," which tries to wed this egocentric temper with Christianity (as Peale before Shuller). Esp. painful to me, as I knew, firsthand, Esalen, "the Mother Church of New Age ideas." Next horror to come: "the evolution of a New Age Right."