

ACT YOUR AGE

An Oration

by

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Extracts from the Baccalaureate Address, Union College, Schenectady, New York, June 6, 1948.

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Paul of Tarsus, whose letters rank among the world's most powerful inspirational literature, provided excellent advice when he said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." The transition from childhood to adolescence to maturity is hard upon every individual and upon those who come in contact with him. "Growing pains" are very real indeed, and yet they are necessary; if we do not feel them or perceive them in others, probably no growth is occurring....

No friend of humanity would ask our youth to grow old before their time, but we do have some right to hope that our minds will keep pace with our years. Rabbi Liebman, in his popular but profound book, "Peace of Mind," suggests that man must learn to respect himself and trust himself, and this is possible only if we achieve mental maturity. When we see voters thinking about political issues with the mental outlook of children, we are discouraged. But when we find men and women living up to the best that the mind of man can do, there is a thrill in the heart, and a new light in the sky.

The breakups or breakdowns which have plagued the human beings of our day have not, however, been entirely mental or physical in nature. It is true that some of us work too hard, and find our bodies and minds shrieking for the oil of rest and the grease of recreation, in order that our parts may function smoothly when properly lubricated. But the psychologists and psychiatrists have studied the idiosyncrasies of mankind with all the devices of modern science, and now feel that many of our tragic maladjustments are emotional rather than physical or rational. If, therefore, we are to avoid the pitfalls of soul misery, we must grow up in our feelings, we must act our age emotionally.

How is this to be accomplished? It is much more intangible than physical growth, which can be controlled by proper food, exercise, and health care. It is much more difficult than mental growth, which can be tested regularly. First of all, life must be so arranged that we can find outlets for our emotions at all ages, so that we can learn to love that which is lovable, admire the admirable, venerate the venerable, and enjoy the enjoyable

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