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# WHY THE ACADEMY?

BY

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In Memoriam

Address delivered before Particular Synod at  
Orange City, May the 4th, 1916



HON. ANTHONY TE PASKE

OCTOBER 15, 1868

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SIOUX CENTER, IOWA

## WHY THE ACADEMY?

It is not without a degree of diffidence that I undertake the duty of addressing this audience. Any effort to bring new ideas here would be but carrying coals to New Castle. I am too well aware that in addressing the Athenians he who stands on Mars Hill must have qualifications superior to mine.

But this duty is not without its flattering aspect. I value highly the compliment that the responsibility of this occasion implies. I feel full well the too kindly estimate of the committee in charge.

However, it gives me no small pleasure to be conscious that I speak to a sympathetic audience. The place assures me of that. It is Orange City, the seat of our Academy, a town and community where more than ordinary interest is taken in higher education. Some years ago I had occasion to look into this question some, and I found that outside of college towns, Orange City had a larger percentage of her young people attending institutions of higher learning than any other town in the state of Iowa. The occasion bespeaks a sympathetic audience. This is Particular Synod, a gathering of men of education, of men who have made the most of their opportunities of education; of men whose education is a blessing to the fellowman.

The community suggests it. This is a Dutch audience. We or our ancestry came from "Brave Little Holland". We know something of her history. We know that when the invading Spaniard was stopped at the gates of Leyden

and that when finally, after untold suffering and super-human endurance, Alva was foiled, William of Holland asked that famous city what it would take as a reward. You know the answer: not unlike that of young Solomon of old. They asked not for the spoils of war, or wealth, or honor, or the arsenals for future conflict; but they requested a university. Long will you turn the pages of history for another incident like that. Blind, indeed, must one be, if he has not seen that our people excel in the love of education.

I am sure that the time, the place, the occasion and the audience are more than half the argument in this case.

And when the Church considers the question of education, she is on familiar ground. The slightest knowledge of history is sufficient to assure us that education has had no better friend and supporter than the Church. The Light of the World has enlightened the mind as well as the spirit. The Church has been ever ready to answer Pilate's cynical question: "What is Truth?", whether it was the truth of the intellect or of the soul. It is regrettable that education sometimes, as an ingrate son, disowns and denies the home of its childhood, and spurns the cradle of its infant years. It should need no argument for the people of the church that she indeed has given education to the world.

I can therefore safely dismiss from my discussion here a defense of the cause of education in general. That has long since been a matter of conviction with us all.

In fact, I shall assume more. In the main, I shall take it for granted that this audience believes in Christian education. That you believe in the institutions of our church, in Rutgers, in Hope, in our Academies, — at Orange City, at Pleasant Prairie and Cedar Grove. Particular Synod is made up largely of men who have one or more of these institutions associated with grateful memories.

This occasion, therefore, requires of me no more than a word in behalf of our Academy at whose door you have met — a word of introduction for our school. The Academy appreciates your coming; she is glad Particular Synod has taken special pains to learn of her at first hand. She does not believe that familiarity breeds contempt, except with contemptible persons and contemptible things. She does not fear acquaintance, but seeks it.

It is a truism that we live in a critical age, an age of criticism. The old saying that whatever is, is right, is no longer true. Precedent has lost a great deal of its force and veneration; and, if slightly irksome, lasts seldom longer than the next session of legislature. Microscope and telescope, test-tube and higher criticism, judicial interpretation and congressional investigating committees, demand the password of existence—aim, or profess to aim, to ascertain the reason for being—the *raison d'être* of this or that.

And so this evening in introducing to you the Academy, I desire that you put me to my proof, and I expect to meet that demand. Not in eloquent words of mine; but in simple narrative of the facts about us must we make our case; namely, to demonstrate the justification of her existence, the reason for her being. The mere fact that when she was founded she filled a so-called long-felt want, is not sufficient. That was just preceding the advent of high schools; and, of course, for intermediate education, the Academy came here to an uncontested field. But that situation is changed. The high school is here and everywhere, and supported generously by the public taxes. Is the Academy still needed? Is she, — at least in a measure, — answering that need? To both of these questions we can answer: Yes. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In answering the question before us, I shall take for granted, for the purpose of this discussion, that good

work is being done by high schools; that we should have them; that they answer a need and a purpose. Unfair disparagement of other institutions is not rendering the Academy the best service. The comparisons that we may make are therefore not made with unfriendly purpose. The aims of different schools may be different; their fields somewhat different. The features that make the Academy attractive to some, may not interest others. On the basis of the greatest good to the greatest number, different curricula must needs be found in different schools. In order that we may not be misunderstood, I wish to say here in language clear and plain: We believe there is a place for the high school. Now, with this statement set down, we ask: "Is there still place for the Academy?" It is to this question that we address ourselves.

There are a number of positive features in the education given at the Academy to which we wish to call attention. These features cannot best be gathered from catalogs and other advertising; but from the output of the school itself. A fair verdict must not be obtained from partisans for either side. But when for thirty commencements she has sent out her graduates — by them you have a right to judge her work. By them the school has a right to demand that her measure be taken.

At the risk of being considered old-fashioned, we hold it fundamental that true education must develop the individual; must make for a more abundant life. Education must make leaders. Here and there a leader comes forth without the education of the schools; but one swallow does not make a summer. The fact remains that higher education develops leaders. If it fails there, it answers its purpose very incompletely. From a vast array of statistics it has been shown that higher education increases one's chances for leadership four hundred fold. It is by this standard that we ask to have the Academy judged.

The Academy is a Christian institution. What has she done for the Kingdom? It is a Reformed school. What has she done for our Church? It purports to lay the foundation for higher education. How have her graduates exemplified that after leaving her walls? It is an educational institution. What is she doing for the cause of education? It is an American institution. Have her alumni done anything to render unto Caesar the things that belong to Caesar? Its home is among an industrious and prosperous people. Have her graduates shown anything of the diligence that maketh rich? Our homes, both the substantial and the humble, have contributed to her enrollment and to her treasury. Has she been doing anything for these homes in return?

We shall see; for by these answers must we stand or fall.

In speaking of a school like ours, have you stopped to think of the influence on the homes of her constituents? Different times we have noticed a boy or girl attend the Academy; and the spirit of the school was transferred to that home. The student often lifted his entire family out of the rut of their provincialism. New life was introduced into that home, and the mansions of their lives were built more stately. You follow that student a few years longer. The parents, the brothers and sisters follow his dreams and his successes; through graduation; often to fields of usefulness, to positions of influence, — often a pulpit — or the mission field. Have you calculated — can you calculate — what the career of that young man is doing with the ideals of a whole family circle? These are not bits of theory; but the manifold experiences of our school every day in the year.

Look at the home from another aspect. During the history of the school 120 young women have graduated; of these some 70 are already presiding over homes of their own. The ideals of this institution, its moral

standards, its principles of thoroughness, its substantial character — are all in a measure transferred to those homes. I have one of these homes in mind. She was one of the rank-and-file graduates. As so many, she taught school for some years; taught a Sunday School class. She has graduated from the school room into the home. The olive plants are not wanting about her table: and you ask her, "Where are you going to send your children to school later on?" — "To the Academy", is the quick response. Tell me not the influence of the home is small. The young man's chances for fame may be better; but in the final balancing of the books, the results may not be according to human calculations.

"He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest—  
In the nice ear of nature, which song is the best?"

The Academy is indeed vindicated in our homes.

During a period of rapid commercial development, the alumni body of this school has not been unresponsive. Almost fifty of our graduates have entered different lines of business. We do not have time to follow all the details; but let us give one illustration worthy of note: At least nine of our former students are now actively interested in the banking business in Sioux County alone. It is certain that no two other schools in the county can make such a showing jointly. Be it noted also that in a line of business where character is so large an asset as it is in banking, there should be so much demand for our students.

I trust we are too practical to despise the fact that among the alumni we count a body of successful business men. In this work-a-day world of ours it seems to be necessary to use money for almost all good causes, including education, to be sure. And it ought not to hurt the institution any, that some of this world's goods is in the hands of her sons and daughters.

If you turn to the professions of medicine and law, what do you find? So far thirty of our graduates have

entered the useful calling of family physician; fifteen have been admitted to the bar. I think it is a conservative estimate, that all the other schools in the county if taken together cannot make a showing better than that. I am but reciting facts; and ask you to draw your own conclusions.

The relation of our graduates to the State is alike creditable. Serving in positions of trust, on school boards, on town councils, as Mayors of their towns, taking part in enterprises of public spirit — all this you find at every turn among our graduates. County offices here and elsewhere they have frequently held. During more than seventeen years last past the office of County Attorney in this county has been continuously held by our graduates. Some ten years ago a poor boy graduated here; but in defiance of his circumstances, to his poverty he added a family. Nothing daunted, he struggled through school (and she helped in the struggle) until he graduated from the University at Vermillion, South Dakota, and to-day Will Bauman is State's Attorney and is located at the same University city. We are here located in the Eleventh Congressional District of Iowa with a population of over 200,000. The delegate who represented this district at the Republican National Convention four years ago was a member of the Class of 1894. And this year the delegate from this District to the Democratic National Convention is a member of the Class of 1888. And one of my classmates, — the class of 1889, — was recently appointed by President Wilson as the postmaster of Holland, Mich.

What think ye — is she not sending out leaders of men? We seek comparison, we invite scrutiny, and confidently await your verdict.

No other activity has enlisted so many of the graduates as the teaching profession. One hundred fifty-six (or forty-four per cent of the total number) have taught at some time — some having chosen that their life's work.

I need not digress on that tremendous influence so set into action in the community and the country over. These teachers, touching the heart springs of the young lives with the influences and ideals of this school, have wielded a power beyond calculation.

One of the proudest distinctions of this institution is the bent it gives to the lives of the students toward higher education — especially among the young men. While a larger number of young women graduates are now seeking higher education than heretofore, so far most of them have been content to stop their education with their graduation here. Yet note these figures: so far our alumni number three hundred fifty-four (354), two hundred thirty-four (234) men and one hundred twenty (120) women. And yet out of the 354 graduates, 231 took additional training after leaving here, most of these a substantial college course. We do not think there is another institution in Iowa purporting to do similar work (outside of college towns) that sends as high a percentage of its graduates to institutions of higher learning. It seems to us that nothing so vindicates not only her ideals of education, but also the character of her scholarship. A letter from Hope college informs me that there is hardly a secondary school anywhere sending students there doing more substantial work than is done right here. Permit me to use the classes of 1914 and 1915 as illustrations. In the former class there were thirteen boys, ten of whom are now taking a college course. Of 1915, seven of her ten boys are at college, and three of her nine girls are taking a college course. If creating a love of learning is a merit, we ask the laurels for the Academy.

And when our boys go to college, what account do they give of themselves? As a larger number attend Hope College than any other, a letter from there may give us useful information. We quote from the letter as follows:

“What have the Academy students done in Hope

College? I take for granted that you are particularly interested in the work of the students who have been here in the past six or eight years. I hope that the following bare facts may be of some help to you in arousing interest in our Academy.

“Jacob Heemstra won the Bust Contest in Oratory in Hope in 1910.

“Harry Hoffs won 1st in Hope and 2nd in the State Oratorical. (And just recently captured the \$500.00 national Carnegie Peace Prize.)  
\$500.00 national Carnegie Peace Prize.)

“Fred De Jong won first in Hope and second in the State Peace Oratorical Contest. (Won second place in the Raven Contest.)

“Henry Jacobs won first in Hope, first in the State, first in the Eastern Division at Columbus, Ohio, and second in the National Temperance Oratorical Contest at Topeka, Kansas.

“Moreover, — Heemstra, Poppen, Hoffs, Maasen, De Jong and Beltman have represented the College in debating with other Colleges.”

And I might add that competition at Hope is not the easiest competition. Only those who do not know or are not honest will deny to Hope College high rank for scholarly attainments.

This is what Ex-Governor Osborn, of Michigan, says of Hope College:

“Michigan should know more of this institution. Only recently have I come to a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the splendid work done here. I have learned that out of nine Rhodes Scholarship eligibles in the State, five are graduates of Hope College, and from my good friend, Judge Steere, of the Michigan Supreme Court, I have the statement that Hope College is doing the highest, the best and the most perfect work of its kind in America. I find

you rank among the world leaders here in the classics."

It is of such a body of students that our graduates make a creditable part, and not infrequently are the leaders. Another letter from Hope College writes inside information. Naming two of our boys, the writer says they "are known to lead the Greeks". In all the varied activities of college life our boys take rank with the best. This writer, after speaking in detail of a number of our graduates there, quotes one of the prominent professors of Hope as speaking of our students for a number of years last past these words: "The students sent (by the Academy) have been on a par with any and every secondary school in the country, second only to Grand Rapids Central High School, and surpassing New York and Chicago schools. The work done has been of a very high quality."

And the writer adds:

"They are at present considered a leading element in Hope's studentry, and always respected for their fine manhood."

I have tried to set out in briefest outline some of the activities of our graduates. The breadth of their sympathies cannot have escaped your notice. Call her a church school if you will. We would not deny the classification: but it is another instance of righteousness being profitable unto all things, including the things of this life. In other colleges, in positions of trust, in the walks of life, in charge of large commercial interests, in the sick room, before the bar, as public servants, — we point to the graduates of the Academy and find them the leaders or among the leaders everywhere.

One of the spots that halt the traveler in his journey abroad is St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Wonderful in its conception and execution from the crypts below to the famous whispering gallery in its lofty dome. Within this vast cathedral is the grave of its architect, Sir Christopher Wren. On the slab over his resting place is

this simple epitaph: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice." (If you seek his monument, look around). Of more value than the building of St. Paul's Cathedral is the building of character. It is in the building of character that the Academy is engaged; and of her too we say, "If you seek her monument, look around."

In addressing this audience — yea, in telling the truth about the Academy, anywhere, I should be quite unfaithful to my trust if I did not speak of the Academy graduates and the Church of Christ. The school is a child of the church pre-eminently, and to the church — to the Kingdom — she brings her most loyal and generous tribute. Do you know that 73 of her graduates have entered the Christian ministry, that enough more are studying theology to make the number eighty, that sixteen are on the mission field; and that naturally the last four or five graduating classes can not yet be counted among these? Something of the spirit that animates our alumni is indicated by the following quotation from one of the letters referred to:

"And last, but not least, of the nine members of the 1917 class in the Western Theological Seminary, five are graduates of the N. W. C. Academy and four of these five will send their application to the Board of Foreign Missions this week, so that the Board may consider them as candidates for China, India or Japan in a year from now. Is this not reason enough for the *raison d'être* of the Academy, when it furnishes more than fifty per cent of the ministers of one class, and two-thirds of the student Volunteers?"

A recital of these simple figures, a counting over of the boys and girls who were with us here but a few short years ago and are now on the watch towers of the Christian church, a large number here at home, a goodly number abroad, — a simple recital of these things is the most eloquent tribute we can offer.



In the Iowa classis alone are twelve ministers who were former students here. The Classes of the Particular Synod of Chicago are honey-combed with our graduates; and our eastern church has called some of our good men thither. Why, the ministers that once were students here would be enough in number to man the entire Reformed Church in America west of the Mississippi River, and not leave one vacant church.

No less worthy of note are our representatives on the various mission field: Ruigh, Kuyper, and Miss Noordhoff in Japan; Gleysteen, Heeren and others in China; Dykstra, Van Peurseem and Pennings in Arabia. Five of our own young women are bringing light of a Christian education to the mountain fastnesses of Kentucky; one to the neglected Red Men of the South.

Men and women of the Church of Christ, what think ye of this school? More fundamental than our churches and our mission stations are these bases of supplies. You take away the Academy, and you virtually stop one of these streams that we have a right to think make glad the city of God.

We will offer one more proof of the correctness of our claims. Comparisons are invidious, and I will mention no names or places. But you can all think of Holland settlements in this country, that have had every other advantage of this community; that are wealthy, that are as old, and perhaps older; and yet that have made comparatively little impression on higher education, and that have done even less toward manning the church with heralds of the Prince of Peace. But they were communities without the Academy to gather the choice young people within her walls, and to start them out in life. Ask yourself and ascertain if it is not true, that the beginning of an education is the difficult part; but where once a student has been given the taste for substantial education, and the foundation has been laid as is done here, then his

higher training is placed within his reach.

It quite amazes me that the church is not more awake to the value of the Academy, to her opportunities, to her needs. Her success is the success of our church in the West; her danger is the danger to the church; her neglect is treason to the church and the Kingdom.

I believe in a Day of Prayer for crops. It is right for us to seek the bounties from the Lord of the temporal harvests. I would not omit such days. But certainly, if the command to seek the Kingdom of heaven first is not yet repealed or obsolete, I would have the Day of Prayer for our schools — for this school — observed with no less interest in every church. She needs more students; she needs more funds; she needs your prayers as really as do the crops.

If her cause is meritorious — if we have justified the reason of her existence — get the facts concerning the institution in mind; have them at your command. Drive them home to your people. You can do it if you will. I know of a church where the sentiment was not particularly friendly, rather indifferent; but the minister had a heart for the school. He made it his business to talk the Academy; he made systematic work of it in his pastoral visitations. And, I need hardly add, the sentiment in that church was revolutionized. Let us be worthy children of the heroes and heroines of Leyden, who wrote a seat of learning in the *carte blanche* of a grateful government.

In the meantime we are profoundly thankful for what the Academy has done, and for what she is still doing. And if rather thoughtlessly one should call my attention to the want of a large endowment or to the absence of imposing buildings, I shall once more call attention to the boys and girls that have passed through here all these years, and as the Roman mother of old, I shall point with pride to them, and say,

"These are my jewels".