

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Annapolis, Maryland



1696-1947

Inauguration of John Spangler Kieffer

As President of St. John's College

SATURDAY, THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF OCTOBER
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN

At Twelve O'Clock Noon

Inaugural Exercises

. . PROGRAMME . .

PROCESSION

The Marshal
The Students
The Alumni
The Faculty
The Former Presidents of St. John's College
The Representatives of Learned Societies and Institutions of Research
The Representatives of Colleges and Universities
The Members of the Board of Visitors and Governors
The Ex Officio Members of the Board of Visitors and Governors
The Reverend William Kyle Smith
The Reverend Charles Edward Berger
The President of the College
The Reverend Henry Pitney Van Dusen
The Chairman of the Board of Visitors and Governors
The Governor of Maryland

INVOCATION

The Reverend William Kyle Smith

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS AND GOVERNORS

The Governor of Maryland

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE

The Chairman of the Board of Visitors and Governors

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

President John Spangler Kieffer

INTRODUCTION OF THE

REVEREND HENRY PITNEY VAN DUSEN

The Chairman of the Board of Visitors and Governors

ADDRESS

The Reverend Henry Pitney Van Dusen

BENEDICTION

The Reverend Charles Edward Berger

RECESSIONAL

Weather permitting, President Kieffer will receive the delegates on the portico of McDowell Hall immediately following the inaugural ceremonies. In case of unfavorable weather, the President will receive the delegates in his office in McDowell Hall.

At one-thirty o'clock there will be a luncheon in Randall Hall for delegates, cut-of-town guests and alumni.

List of Representatives

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- 1636 Harvard University.....Glenn C. Bramble, A.B., LL.B.
- 1693 College of William and Mary.....John Tyler, A.M.
- 1701 Yale University.....Carroll Storrs Alden, M.A., Ph.D.
- 1742 Moravian College for Women..Edwin J. Heath, M.A., D.D. LL.D.,
President
- 1746 Princeton University...The Rev. Henry Pitney Van Dusen, A.B.,
B.D., Ph.D., S.T.D., D.D., Charter Trustee
- 1749 Washington and Lee University.....Edward S. Delaplaine, B.A.
- 1754 Columbia University.....Mark Van Doren, Ph.D., Litt.D.
- 1769 Dartmouth College.....Alden R. Hefler, A.B., M.A., Ph.D.
- 1775 Hampden Sydney College.....George A. Lyle, B.S., M.S.
- 1782 Washington College.....Gilbert W. Mead, M.A., Litt.D., LL.D.,
President
- 1783 Dickinson College...William W. Edel, A.M., D.D., L.H.D., President
- 1787 Franklin and Marshall College...Paul Kieffer, B.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.),
LL.D., President of the Board of Trustees
- 1787 University of Pittsburgh.....Stanton C. Crawford, Ph.D., LL.D.,
Dean of the College
- 1789 Georgetown University.....Francis M. Furlong, M.D.
- 1789 University of North Carolina...J. B. Scarborough, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.
- 1793 Williams College.....Irving M. Day, B.A., B.S., in E.E.
- 1794 Bowdoin College.....Winford H. Smith, A.B., Sc.D., M.D.
- 1795 Union College.....Clarence W. Stryker, B.A., M.A.
- 1802 United States Military Academy.....John W. Dobson, B.S.,
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S.A.
- 1807 University of Maryland.....H. F. Cotterman, B.S., M.A., Ph.D.,
Dean of the Faculty
J. Freeman Pyle, Ph. B., A.M., Ph.D., Acting Dean of the
College of Arts and Sciences, Dean of the College
of Business and Public Administration
- 1808 Mount St. Mary's College...The Rt. Rev. John L. Sheridan, M.A.,
LL.D., President
- 1812 Hamilton College.....The Rev. John H. Gardner, Jr., A.B., D.D.,
Trustee
- 1815 Allegheny College.....Paul A. Siple, Ph.D., D.Sc.
- 1817 University of Michigan.....Roger Thomas, A.B., A.M.
- 1819 Centre College of Kentucky.....William Jennings Price,
A.B., A.M., LL.D.
- 1819 Norwich University.....John S. Gerety, A.B., Lt. Col., U.S.A.
- 1819 University of Virginia...The Rev. William Kyle Smith, B.S., Th.B.
- 1820 Colby College.....Victor Ray Jones, A.B., A.M.
- 1820 Indiana University.....George H. McFarlin, A.B., A.M.
- 1821 Amherst College.....Albert William Atwood, M.A.
- 1821 George Washington University.....Myron L. Koenig, Ph.D.,
Dean of the Junior College
- 1821 McGill University.....Warde B. Allen, B.A., M.D.
- 1824 Kenyon College.....Charles C. W. Judd, A.B., M.D.
- 1826 Lafayette College.....Eli Swavely, E.E., Litt.M.
- 1829 Illinois College.....Douglas R. Lacey, A.B., M.A.
- 1830 Randolph-Macon College.....J. N. Galloway, A.B., M.A.
- 1831 Denison University...Herbert Grove Dorsey, B.S., M.S., Ph.D., Sc.D.
- 1831 New York University.....Francis J. Brown, A.B., M.A., Ph.D.
- 1831 Wesleyan University.....John William Spaeth, Jr., Ph.D.,
Secretary of the Faculty and Professor
- 1832 Gettysburg College...Henry W. A. Hanson, D.D., LL.D., President
- 1832 University of Richmond.....Eugene K. Ritter, B.A., M.A.

List of Representatives

(Continued)

- 1833 Haverford College.....Felix Morley, Ph.D., LL.D., D.Litt.,
Former President
- 1833 Oberlin College..William Treat Upton, Mus.D., Professor Emeritus
- 1836 Union Theological Seminary....The Rev. Henry Pitney Van Dusen,
B.D., Ph.D., S.T.D., D.D., President
- 1837 DePauw University.....Lofton S. Wesley, B.A., M.B.A.
- 1837 Knox College.....James A. Campbell, A.B., M.D.
- 1837 University of Louisville.....F. L. Wilkinson, Jr., M.S., D.Eng.
- 1837 Marshall College.....L. H. Chambers, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.
- 1837 Mount Holyoke College.....Mrs. Henry Sandlass, B.A.
- 1839 Boston University.....The Rev. J. Luther Neff, A.B., S.T.B., D.D.
- 1841 Fordham University..The Rev. John E. Wise, S.J., A.B., M.A., Ph.D.
- 1842 Roanoke College.....Miles Wolff, A.B., A.M.
- 1842 Williamette University.....Ross T. McIntire, M.D., Sc.D., LL.D.,
Vice Admiral, (M.C.), U.S.N., (Retired)
- 1845 Adrian College.....The Rev. Montgomery J. Shroyer, Ph.B.,
S.T.B., M.A., Ph.D.
- 1845 United States Naval Academy.....C. S. Seabring, B.S., M.S.,
Captain, U.S.N.
- 1845 Wittenberg College.....Paul J. Kiefer, A.B., B.S., M.S.
- 1846 Beloit College.....Carroll Storrs Alden, M.A., Ph.D.
- 1846 Bucknell University...The Rev. D. Hobart Evans, A.B., M.A., Th.B.
- 1847 The City College of New York.....Louis L. Snyder, A.B., Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor
- 1847 Otterbein College.....Jacob S. Gruver, A.B., M.A., LL.D., Trustee
- 1848 University of Mississippi.....Mrs. Mary Hartsfield McClain, B.S.
- 1848 Muhlenberg College.....John D. M. Brown, A.B., A.M., Litt.D.,
Professor
- 1848 University of Wisconsin.....The Rev. Adolph John Stiemke
- 1849 William Jewell College.....Vernon E. Moore, B.A.
- 1850 Capital University.....E. P. Wuebbens, A.B., D.D., Commander,
(Ch.C.), U.S.N.
- 1850 Hiram College.....Guy Roger Clements, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.
- 1850 Illinois Wesleyan University.....W. F. Eckley, M.S., Lieutenant
Commander, U.S.N.
- 1850 University of Rochester.....William Roy Vallance, A.B., LL.B.
- 1851 College of the Pacific.....Lloyd M. Bertholf, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.,
Dean elect
- 1851 Milwaukee-Downer College.....Mrs. David A. Johnston, B.S.
- 1851 University of Minnesota.....Richard J. Purcell, A.B.,
M.A., Ph.D., LL.B.
- 1851 Northwestern University.....Otto C. Brantigan, B.S., B.M., M.D.
- 1852 Loyola College, Baltimore....The Rev. Francis X. Talbot, S.J., A.B.,
M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., D.H.L., President
- 1852 Tufts College.....Donald McClench, Captain, U.S.N.R.
- 1853 Antioch College.....W. Lee Williams, B.S.
- 1854 Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn.....E. L. Midgette, B.S. in M.E.,
M.S. in M.E., Professor
- 1857 The University of the South.....H. H. Lumpkin, B.A., M.A.
- 1859 Valparaiso University.....Rudolph S. Ressmeyer, Board Member
- 1860 Bard College.....William Frauenfelder, A.B., M.A., Professor
- 1861 Luther College.....M. H. Trytten, Ph.D.
- 1861 Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
George Whittier Spaulding, S.B., Honorary Secretary
- 1863 Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science,
B. H. Buikstra, B.S., M.S.
- 1865 Cornell University.....Edward M. Hanrahan, A.B., M.D.

List of Representatives

(Continued)

- 1865 Lehigh University.....Earl L. Crum, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., Professor
 1865 University of Kentucky.....John D. Goodloe, A.B., LL.B.
 1866 Carleton College.....John P. C. McCarthy, A.B., A.M.
 1866 The College of Wooster.....William G. Workman, B.S., M.D.
 1866 Hope College.....The Rev. Henry K. Pasma, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.
 1866 State Teachers College at Towson.....Earle T. Hawkins, A.B.
 A.M., Ph.D., President
 1867 Drew University...The Rev. Westfield W. Delaplain, A.B., B.D., D.D.
 1867 Howard University.....Mordecai W. Johnson, A.B., S.T.H.,
 D.D., LL.D., President
 1867 University of Illinois.....J. J. Rutledge, B.S., Ph.D.
 1867 Western Maryland College.....Lowell S. Ensor, A.B., B.D., D.D.,
 President
 1868 University of New Hampshire.....George W. Blanchard, B.A.
 1868 Wells College.....Richard L. Greene, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., President
 1869 Pennsylvania College for Women.....Louise L. Fontaine, A.B.
 1869 Wilson College.....Mrs. Paul B. Thomas, A.B., Trustee
 1869 Woodstock College.....The Rev. Joseph C. Glose, S.J., Ph.D.
 Director of Studies
 1870 University of Cincinnati.....Logan Morrill, A.B., LL.B.
 1870 The Ohio State University.....William W. Hammerschmidt, Ph.D.
 1870 St. John's University, Brooklyn.....The Rev. John A. Flynn,
 S.T.D., President
 1870 Stevens Institute of Technology.....B. F. Childs, M.E.
 1870 Syracuse University.....Louis H. Bolander, A.B.
 1870 Wellesley College.....Myrna Sedgwick, A.B.
 1870 Wilmington College.....Elizabeth E. Haviland, Ph.D.
 1871 Elmhurst College.....The Rev. W. H. Kochheim, M.A., M.T.H.
 1871 Smith College.....Mrs. Burrett E. McBee, B.A.
 1874 Colorado College.....Frank H. J. Figge, A.B., Ph.D.
 1875 Park College.....Philip L. Warden, A.B., B.J.
 1875 Parsons College.....Wayne C. Neely, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.
 1876 Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas...John B. Jones, B.S.
 1876 University of Colorado....Stanley K. Hornbeck, A.B., B.A., Ph.D.,
 LL.D., L.H.D., Litt.D.
 (University of Utrecht), Litt.D., Litt.D.
 1876 Johns Hopkins University...Sidney Painter, A.B., Ph.D., Professor
 1879 University of Southern California.....William W. Evans, M.A.
 1881 Drake University.....Kenneth F. McLaughlin, B.A., M.A.
 1881 Marquette University.....William P. McCahill, B.S., M.A.
 1881 Newark College of Engineering.....George C. Vedova, M.A.
 Ph.D., Professor
 1883 Seton Hill College.....Edda Tille Hankamer, Ph.D., Professor
 1883 Wagner College.....Willard M. Grimes, Jr., B.S.
 1885 University of Arizona.....A. Boyd Mewborn, B.S., M.S., Ph.D.
 1885 Bryn Mawr College.....Eleanor A. Bliss, A.B., Sc.D.,
 Alumnae Director
 1885 Georgia School of Technology.....D. Cooper Inglett, B.C.S.
 1885 Goucher College.....C. I. Winslow, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., Professor
 and Administrative Assistant
 1885 Macalester College.....Wallace F. Janssen, B.A.
 1885 Southwestern College.....Lloyd M. Bertholf, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.
 1885 Springfield College.....The Rev. George A. Taylor, B.S.
 1885 Stanford University.....Charles D. Snyder, A.B., M.S., Ph.D.
 1886 University of Chattanooga.....Gilbert W. Mead, Litt.D., LL.D.
 1886 Winthrop College.....Mrs. Carl Purvis Russell, A.B.
 1887 Clark University.....Earl W. Thompson, A.B., A.M.

List of Representatives

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| 1887 | Occidental College..... | C. W. Seekins, A.B., Ph.D. |
| 1887 | Pomona College..... | Carl I. Wheat, A.B., LL.B. |
| 1890 | University of Oklahoma..... | William H. Bayliff, A.B., M.S. |
| 1891 | University of Chicago..... | Aaron J. Brumbaugh, A.B., A.M., Ph.D. |
| 1891 | Drexel Institute of Technology..... | Leon D. Stratton, B.S., M.S. Ph.D., Dean of Men |
| 1893 | The American University..... | Pitman B. Potter, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate Division |
| 1893 | Hood College..... | The Rev. Henri L. G. Kieffer, A.B., D.D., Trustee |
| 1893 | Randolph-Macon Woman's College... | Mrs. Blanche Busey Thomson |
| 1893 | Upsala College..... | The Rev. Loyd A. Holt, A.B., B.T. |
| 1894 | Morningside College..... | Ralph E. Root, B.S., M.S., Ph.D., Sc.D. |
| 1895 | College of Notre Dame of Maryland..... | Margaret Mary Toole, M.A., Professor |
| 1899 | Simmons College..... | June Nichols, B.S., Regional Representative |
| 1900 | Carnegie Institute of Technology..... | Elmer E. Hobbs, B.S. |
| 1901 | Sweet Briar College..... | Mrs. Herbert Peck Fales |
| 1904 | College of New Rochelle..... | Mary Clary, A.B. |
| 1908 | Oklahoma College for Women..... | Mrs. Richard S. West, Jr., A.B. |
| 1909 | U. S. Naval Postgraduate School..... | F. L. Wilkinson, Jr., M.S., D.Eng., Academic Dean |
| 1909 | University of Redlands..... | Robert O. Bonnell, A.B. |
| 1911 | Connecticut College..... | Mrs. Anna D. Gillmer, A.B. |
| 1916 | Russell Sage College.... | Mabelle L. Moses, M.A., Professor Emeritus |
| 1916 | St. Joseph's College for Women... | Cecilia A. Trunz, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. |
| 1920 | Immaculata College..... | The Rev. Vincent L. Burns, Ph.D., Sc.D., President |
| 1921 | Keuka College..... | Mrs. Alice Y. Skalnik, A.B., M.A. |
| 1926 | Sarah Lawrence College..... | Betty Fleischmann, B.A. |
| 1945 | Roosevelt College..... | S. McKee Rosen, A.B., Ph.D. |

LEARNED SOCIETIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF RESEARCH

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|------|---|--|
| 1780 | American Academy of Arts and Sciences.. | Philip Bard, Ph.D., Sc.D. |
| 1844 | Maryland Historical Society..... | George L. Radcliffe, A.B., Ph.D., LL.B., LL.D., President |
| 1863 | National Academy of Sciences... | Raymund Lull Zwemer, A.B., Ph.D., Executive Secretary |
| 1882 | Enoch Pratt Free Library..... | Emerson Greenaway |
| 1884 | American Historical Association..... | Sidney Painter, A.B., Ph.D. |
| 1899 | American Astronomical Society..... | G. M. Clemence, Ph.D. |
| 1900 | Association of American Universities... | Sidney Painter, A.B., Ph.D. |
| 1902 | Carnegie Institute of Washington..... | F. G. Fassett, Jr., A.B., A.M. |
| 1914 | Association of American Colleges... | Gilbert W. Mead, Litt.D., LL.D. |
| 1918 | American Council on Education..... | Francis J. Brown, A.B., M.A., Ph.D., Staff Associate |
| 1918 | National Research Council..... | Raymund Lull Zwemer, A.B., Ph.D., Executive Secretary |
| 1935 | Maryland Hall of Records..... | Morris L. Radoff, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., Archivist |

List of Representatives

(Continued)

SPECIAL GREETINGS HAVE BEEN SENT BY THE FOLLOWING
COLLEGES WHO WERE UNABLE TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES:

1740 University of Pennsylvania
1834 Tulane University
1836 Emory University
1846 Carroll College
1852 Laval University
1853 Cornell College
1856 Lake Erie College
1886 Kansas Wesleyan University
1891 The Rice Institute
1898 Seattle College
1917 Providence College



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

PRESIDENT JOHN SPANGLER KIEFFER

Governor Lane, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Van Dusen, distinguished delegates from our sister institutions, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen:

A sense of privilege fills me today as I assume formally the office to which the Board of Visitors and Governors of St. John's College elected me last April. It is the privilege of heading the administration of the St. John's program, in the beginning of which I shared ten years ago, and in the development of which I have had a part; and the privilege of being president of St. John's College, where I have spent eighteen years of my teaching life.

Eighteen years is a brief time in comparison with the two hundred and fifty years of St. John's College, but it is nearly half of the years of active teaching a teacher may expect. It is long enough to have seen four and half college generations pass through these halls. In eighteen years I have come to know as students and friends alumni of the college who are now established in their careers, as useful and distinguished citizens. I have come to feel myself an Annapolitan, and to have a sense of pride that my life has been lived in the capital of my native state. My pride is multiplied many times by my association with this institution which has since the early days of the colony been engaged in teaching the liberal arts and training young men to become useful to the society in which they live, and ornaments to their community.

Times have changed since those days of post war confusion when King William's School, the old colonial institution of the liberal arts, was being rechartered as St. John's College. The first classes of what George Washington lauded as an infant seminary were soon to meet in Annapolis at the time that the delegates from the sovereign states were coming together at the Annapolis convention—the convention which, abortive in itself, was glorious as the forerunner of the Philadelphia convention. Then St. John's was conceived as serving not even all Maryland but the Western Shore as our sister Washington College served the Eastern Shore. Those days of slow communication have given place to this day of almost instantaneous transport from place to place. The little college for the local Maryland community has become an institution to which students from far-away California come more quickly than did boys from St. Mary's county a century and a half ago.

Communication is, however, not merely a matter of oxcart and aeroplane. Though the students of a century and a half ago traveled longer to Annapolis than do those today who travel farther, they came to study under a curriculum that brought them

into immediate communication with their fellows at Harvard and William and Mary, at Dickinson and Franklin and Marshall, as well as with their fellows across the water and across the ages back to the legendary beginnings of the European universities. Under the classical curriculum of that time the liberally educated man had a sure basis of communication with all educated men. He had an insight into the best that had been thought and said by previous generations and he would be understood by his peers no matter what their college.

How different is education today! Our colleges not only pursue diverse aims and separate into schools that stress one subject or another, but within any one college departmental lines and the special Languages of special subjects have all too often made it impossible for men who hold the same degree from the same institution to talk to one another.

To meet this situation St. John's College instituted the so-called Great Books curriculum ten years ago. It is this program which we are carrying on despite the change in administration which today's exercises mark. As I assume the presidency of St. John's College I make no proclamation of new policy. The program that Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan began ten years ago has so taken hold of Board, of faculty and students that to every one of them it is unthinkable that we should be doing anything other than we are. It has awakened a response so widespread among other teachers, among parents and among people generally that we could not if we would, depart from it. To a nation desperately in need that communication be reestablished among its citizens, St. John's has offered a way to recover our common tongue.

By recovering our common tongue I do not mean reverting to the idiom of the past. The noble words of the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the Constitution still have the power to move our souls; but the revolution that began then and is rising now to the intensity of a hurricane has swept away most of the intellectual foundation of their language. We have set ourselves the high purpose of translating that language into an idiom appropriate to today.

The St. John's curriculum presupposes that there is a unity of knowledge which informs men's efforts to understand their world, and that in the Great Books of Western Civilization men's successes and fruitful failures from Homer to the present day have been recorded. Until classical education shriveled into a closed and sterile classicism its tradition, made of many strands, allowed the minds of successive generations by reflection and by experiment to make for themselves forms for understanding their experience.

The natural sciences, like Napoleon shattering the Holy Roman Empire, shattered with the full vigor of their crude new power, the empire of the classics. The classics continued in the curriculum on sufferance, a Vienna venerated for its architecture and ancient culture. Meanwhile the imperium of the mind was Balkanized. A balance of power among sovereign states came into being as the elective system. The later attempts to alleviate the faults of free election by schemes of concentration and distribution are leagues of nations keeping the fallacy of the League, the dogma of separate sovereignty. Under this dispensation the separate departments encroach on each other's sovereignty, flout the league when it pleases them, and sometimes set themselves up as pretenders to sole power over the mind.

At St. John's we reassert the right of the common intellect to sovereignty over its separate parts whether practical or speculative. We deny that there are mathematical minds, linguistic minds or minds at home only with things. Whatever special interests a student ultimately pursues he first must grasp the principles that are the basis of the mind's sovereignty and learn the common language that they speak.

The Great Books are the dictionary and grammar of this common language. Dictionary, because they contain the myths that are as it were the words of the language. Like words these myths mean concrete things and again like words they have a general reference. Helen is the daughter of Zeus and stolen bride of Paris; but she is also the gift of Aphrodite, or the cause of war. And so of Hamlet, of Apollonius' Cones, of Darwin's changing species, the elements and atoms. Grammar, because the ordering relations by which men rationalize experience are contained in them: tragedy and comedy, Socratic dialectic, Thomistic commentary, analysis and synthesis, experiment and hypothesis, the periodic table of the chemists. The Great Books teach this grammar by example and by explicit exposition.

The marks of a great book are first, excellence. It is a work of fine art and its surface, the immediate impression it makes, shows the reader that much is contained in it. Second, range, the fact that the authors of the books do not treat a subject matter in isolation, but imply other subjects, furnish analogies with many parts of experience. Oedipus' tragedy may be seen in terms of character and ethics, or of fate and reason. As a tragedy it is a pattern for complication, crisis and denouement which may be seen in Hippocrates' medical works, in Thucydides' History, or in an Euclidean construction. The range of a dialogue of Plato is almost unlimited. The third mark of a great book is implicit in the illustrations I have given for the second. It is contact with other great books. Aquinas comments on Aristotle. Ptolemy, Virgil and Aquinas meet in Dante. Shakespeare may be contrasted with Aeschylus in terms of Aristotle's Poetics. Darwin, Marx

and Freud, who dominate our present world, are read with better understanding by those who have read Sophocles, Plato, Cervantes and Calvin. The fourth mark is infinitude. The questions raised by the great books are continually being answered only to refute their answers, and to lead further towards answers that may never be attained, though manifestly they are there. If not there would be no questions.

Two points are clear: first that we do not make the Great Books an authoritative source of any dogmatic Truth. They tell truth but the student must have the wit to find it; the truth they tell is not truth because of their authority. One learns from them how to assent to truth, as one learns from his mother tongue to construct a meaningful sentence. Secondly, it is clear that the St. John's curriculum is not wasted in sterile verbalism. The language of the Great Books is the language of ideas. Under the sovereignty of ideas words and opinions do the bidding of the mind, and do not dare set up petty tyrannies of their own.

At St. John's we do not "teach" the Great Books, we learn from them. Learning is not committing to memory other people's opinions. The heart of our teaching is the seminar. Here in bi-weekly discussion of assigned portions of the books, the play of question and answer enlightens the student by showing the ignorance surrounding his opinions. Reduction to absurdity makes him know that he doesn't know, and starts him on the way to knowledge. The list of books contains within itself on a grand scale the same struggle with the ignorance of the race. As the student reads for seminar during his four years in college, poetry and history record and generalize experience of human action; the works of natural science and of mathematics construct the stage on which the drama of human destiny is played and reveal its conventions. In metaphysics and theology the principles of man and nature are analyzed and their analogical bonds made clear. The seminar reading of the list is strengthened and indeed made possible by scientific and artistic practice in daily classes in language and mathematics and in the laboratory. Here are used the symbols men have devised to organize and communicate what they have learned and to find ways for further learning. In this age of science the four years of laboratory we require gives a comprehension of the scientific revolution and a speculative and practical grasp of the instruments, measurements and hypothesizing that is the intellectual grounding of the sciences.

As I have implied, we are determined to give science its proper place in the traditional education of our culture. We do not agree with those who would use the experimental method in all learning. Those who attempt this find themselves holding unexplained or unacknowledged dogmas wherever they try to be scientific in fields whose content is not physical nature. We do not agree, either, with those who would humanize science by saying that

scientists should read poetry, study ethics, or become Christians. Of course they should! But not compartmentally. Science is a way of knowing, and because of the unity of knowledge has an identity with other ways of knowing. It differs in a secondary way from other ways of knowing in its direct dealing with natural phenomena; uses devices such as the calculus or the balance, appropriate to its objects. Though the mass of accumulated data frightens all who would find a place for science in the liberal curriculum, a teaching that deals with the rational basis of its symbols and instruments, and the rational basis of its recognition of truth, while anchoring itself firmly in the manual arts of the laboratory, can offer a clue through the maze. The ultimate solution to the teaching of science is far off. We are seriously attempting to reach this solution, standing on the principles of liberal education. We neither surrender to science, nor try to soothe the beast with Orpheus' lute.

Such, in outline, is the St. John's program. Since culture and education are creations of the mind, the first business of a college is intellectual activity. The intellectual activity of the college rests on good habits and emotional maturity, which are the responsibility of the family. It is spurred on by love of the good, which is the responsibility of religion. In college the formative power of the family over physical development must continue; the college must fulfill its intellectual responsibility to the signs of faith. A college however, is neither a parent nor a church. Habits are preparatory to understanding, and understanding is clarifying for faith, but the college's main business is understanding.

It is always an individual who understands. Therefore the individual is, for the college as for society, an end in himself. There would however be no colleges had not the human race of rational and political animals formed itself into communities rather than congregating into herds. Education perpetuates the community, just as birth, which is the original meaning of the Latin *educatio*, perpetuates the herd. Culture and education are the same thing and college is but a segment in a continuing process. Through culture and education the individual finds his place in the community by finding himself and the common good. The educated man's responsibility is to be a workman, a citizen and a man. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are the terms in which the Declaration of Independence states this responsibility as man's God-given right. The St. John's program of study under the great teachers of Western Culture gives a man the wholeness of culture by which to realize the inter-relation of the individual's being with the community's as he learns the inter-relation or his learning with transcendent truth. From them he learns to choose wisely his vocation in the community and to grasp the principles of science and art that underlie the special skills of every profession or trade; he learns to choose wisely in deliberations about the

common welfare and in choosing wisely to help preserve our common liberties; he learns finally to face his destiny as a man, on which depends his happiness.

The college, then, in contrast to a factory or farm, whose products are external goods, produces the fabric of which society itself is made. It is at once a miniature society, a small community within society and also a member of a community larger than the state. A free nation is a community of men who live in a greater community which is temporarily actualized in the whole of history, idealized by the myth of the Garden of Eden or the Golden Age, and finally realized in the Kingdom of Heaven. Its rulers are ideas. Membership in this greater community guarantees a free political society. It enables us to *know* ourselves, to learn our difference from mere members of a herd. It enables us to question and justify the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and frees us from having to accept them merely as hypotheses. The totalitarian state enslaves its subjects by the very fact of recognizing no greater community.

A college is the guardian of freedom for its nation if it naturalizes its citizens in this greater community through reading beyond words to ideas. The republic of letters is democratic. Ideas keep no Blue Book of acceptable friends, exercise no tyranny, join no cartels. The Great Books keep open house. A democratic society is incomplete if it denies liberal education to anyone prepared to receive it. It will be ineffectual if the majority of its citizens have not entered the republic of letters. Education plays democracy false if in the name of democracy it offers the majority a partial education and lets our schools turn out graduates who lack acquaintance with excellence. It strangles democracy if in the name of democracy it denies that there is any standard of truth except opinion.

The crisis of the modern world has long been evident in the crisis and confusion of its education. It has become appallingly evident to every citizen that we are threatened with the breakdown of civilization. Since civilization and civil institutions exist in the minds of men, we are failing as citizens and as men. We cannot look to somebody else to save us or hope that emotion will carry us through. Nothing but hard thinking about fundamental matters, eternal verities if you will, can avail. The Great Books are the guides to such thinking, not, let me repeat, because the answers are in the back of the book, but because they illuminate the questions and help us find our own answers. We are being challenged from the outside because we are weak within ourselves. When we discover the principles on which our civilization is built and recover our common language, we will withstand all assaults of our enemies. It is the privilege and determined duty of St. John's to join with all our sister institutions in this discovery.

EDUCATION IN CRISIS

THE REVEREND HENRY PITNEY VAN DUSEN

My first word must be one of brief but cordial congratulation to St. John's College on its new president, and of felicitation and good wishes to President Kieffer as he takes up his new office. And in this, I am sure I speak for all, and especially for the academic representatives, who are gathered here this morning.

To suggest that *American education stands today in crisis* is a statement which evokes neither surprise nor interest. It strikes our ears less as the proclamation of news than as the reiteration of an old and hackneyed refrain. The very word "crisis" is a verbal coin whose faces have been worn flat by excessive handling. And nowhere more than in discussions of education. A penchant for self-scrutiny is a familiar feature of the academic mind, a sign of health as well as of disease.

But there is reason to believe that today's self-criticism is more than the latest expression of a perennial mood. It is usually assumed that the current crisis in education is one expression of the world's crisis. It might be argued that the causal relation is the reverse. Rather, we are witnessing the sudden precipitation—in both society and the schools—of a solution which has been slowly forming over many decades.

II

Let me refresh your memories of the historical background.

As is well known, higher education in the United States was initially almost exclusively under religious auspices. Colleges were mainly of two types. Earliest were those along the Atlantic seaboard which have since developed into the privately endowed institutions, most of them founded as training-schools for leadership in church and state—like Harvard College, "lest New England be cursed with an illiterate ministry!" Among these, St. John's holds an ancient and honored place.

Somewhat later in appearance were the so-called "Church Colleges," scattered in every state of the Union, founded by particular religious Communions, in order that their youth might have the privileges of the higher learning, to be furnished them in an avowedly and vigorously Christian setting.

Only at a much later period did secular higher education attain significant proportions. Until less than a half century ago, the relation of religion to collegiate training in America was two-fold. The Church was prevaillingly the parent and sponsor of education. And religion was the keystone of the educational arch—the controlling factor in both theory and practice.

This was precisely as most Americans wished. The role of religion in the instruction of their children exactly mirrored the importance they professed to give it in their own lives.

Courses were few and fundamental. Students' programs of study were, for the most part, uniform and required. The aim of education was conceived as the preparation of the total person for all of life; therefore, training of intellect and character claimed equal priority.

III

A new epoch dates roughly from the turn of the last century. Its twin features were *multiplication* and *secularization*.

As recently as 1907, college *students* in this country totalled only 300,000. Thirty years later, their number had multiplied four-fold; today almost ten-fold. Such rapid increase in clientele could be cared for only by a mushroom growth and multiplication of institutions, of diverse sizes and types, under a variety of sponsorships, in every corner of the land.

However, multiplication was not only in *students* and *institutions*, but also in *subject matters*. These were the decades of the most rapid extension and diversification of knowledge in human history. Accommodation in the structure of education was inevitable. The larger universities multiplied schools and divisions; the smaller colleges multiplied departments; all multiplied subjects and courses within almost every department. This development has flourished all along the line, but with most jubilant unrestraint in the so-called "practical" and vocational fields, rather than in the traditional and humanistic disciplines. Not only have the *dimensions* of the typical curriculum swollen almost beyond recognition; the traditional *balance* has altered even more drastically.

Diversification in knowledge and subjects has had its parallel within *faculties* in the familiar advance of specialization in scholarship and a corresponding narrowing of the area of competence of each instructor, a development which led Professor Whitehead to the considered declaration: "The increasing departmentalization of universities during the past hundred years, however necessary for administrative purposes, tends to trivialize the mentality of the teaching profession."

It has found expression among *students* in the invitation to "free election," what has been not inaptly described as "the bargain-counter theory of education." Indeed, the present-day university curriculum reminds one of nothing so much as a cafeteria, where unnumbered tasty intellectual delicacies are

strung along a moving belt for individual choice without benefit of dietary advice or caloric balance. And the result in the mind of the student? All too often, obesity or mental indigestion; or, it may be, malnutrition and even pernicious intellectual anemia!

Finally, multiplication has been paralleled, as both effect and cause, by progressive *secularization*. No longer is religion a dominant factor in education, either its theory or its practice. No longer is religion the keystone in the arch of truth, but rather one brick among many, and a brick for which no very logical or satisfactory place within the main structure has been discovered. Thus, American education has sloughed off its traditional principle of organization, of coherence and cohesion.

IV

In the past few years, something which may not unfairly be characterized as a revolution in the underlying philosophy of higher education in America has quietly been taking place.

It was foreshadowed shortly before the recent War in a number of institutions, most notably in this College which today we delight to honor, less boldly and consistently at Chicago, Harvard, Princeton and elsewhere. Those first revolts against the long-dominant drift, then often derided and dismissed as quixotic or reactionary, are now seen to have been early anticipations of a tidal movement which, under the solemnizing impetus of wartime self-examination, has brought most of higher education in America under its power.

A recent survey revealed that, of some thirty leading colleges and universities of every type and in every part of the country which were projecting radical curricular revision, over three-fourths were instituting changes at these points:

Increased emphasis on *general education* with decreased opportunity for *specialization*;

Increased *requirement* of specific courses or subjects with decreased privilege of *free election*;

Increased insistence upon *distribution* of the student's program of study among all the major areas of human knowledge.

Thus is revealed a trend which is nation-wide, which embraces institutions of every size and type, which is nearly universal. This deliberately determined trend is a direct reversal of the drift which had ruled higher education in America for half a century. We have called it a "revolution." It might equally appropriately be defined as a "conversion"—an about-face in the orientation of educational philosophy.

V

How are we to explain this extraordinary revolution? What are its motives and its principles, whether avowed or covert?

The most generally acknowledged motive is expediential. The Harvard Report on *General Education in a Free Society* voices the widespread concern over the prevailing chaos in American culture. It points to the "supreme need of American education for a unifying purpose and idea." It proposes to overtake the present lack by introducing each undergraduate to "a common body of information and ideas which would be in some measure the possession of all students." (We seem to detect here the direct influence of St. John's, which the Harvard Committee freely confesses.)

But one must point out that this motivation, however legitimate, is merely pragmatic. To turn forth a generation of national leaders possessed of a "common universe of discourse" through acquaintance with the same subject-matter, and thus to prepare a seedplot for the reintegration of American culture, is a counsel of expediency, and possibly of despair. The allegiance of learning, when true to itself, is not given to national need, however urgent, but to TRUTH as its regnant liege-lord.

Beneath almost all the current proposals for reform, with all their variety in detail, lie two assumptions, covert when not avowed, regarding the two basic factors in the high art of schooling—the nature of truth and the nature of man. It is these two usually unconfessed assumptions which require to be brought forth and placed under the white light of critical examination and appraisal. It is to them that I invite your special attention.

VI

The first assumption is the *organic unity of truth*. This is openly avowed by Yale which affirms that "knowledge for all its convenient compartmentalization is essentially one piece, as is the life which supports knowledge;" and by Princeton which grounds its new course of study firmly on the "twofold belief in the *unity of knowledge* and the diversity of human beings."

The organic unity of truth—each several part being what it is by virtue of its place within the Whole. This carries the corollary of the *coherence of knowledge*, which is man's apprehension of truth. To be sure, no human mind, or all together, ever succeeds in encompassing the Whole of Truth. But, by the same token, no human mind rightly grasps any fragment of truth without at least some dim awareness of the Whole

which gives each fragment its existence and its meaning. Moreover, if truth be an organism, then every reflection of truth in man's knowledge—every subject of the curriculum and all its subdivisions—ought to be so presented as to suggest that ultimate unity. Knowledge which is portrayed without conscious recognition of its interrelatedness to all other knowledge is inadequately, falsely presented. In the most literal sense, it is not TRUTH which is being set forth. And that is unsound learning. A first task of education is to bring home to the student, through its underlying philosophy and through every aspect of its teaching, a steadily deepening and controlling awareness of the organic unity of all truth.

Parenthetically, I may be permitted to point out that this is an assumption with immense significance for religion. It forces the question: If truth is an organic whole, how does it come to be so? Whence springs the interrelatedness and coherence of knowledge? What do these imply regarding the nature of reality? We are driven hard up against the ultimate issue, for learning and for life—the question of God. The fact that few educators thus far have had the perspicuity, or more probably the courage, thus to define and face the issue four-square does not alter its essential character.

VII

The other assumption concerns the other basic factor in the educational process—the student. Stated quite simply, it is that the youth of seventeen to twenty years of age is not competent to decide the essentials of his own education. The college must accept responsibility to determine, in considerable measure, his choices. And, in an age lacking coherence and in a culture crying for cohesion but under the domination of specialized interests and fragmentary loyalties, it must introduce him to the great disciplines of learning which together constitute the foundations of an educated mind.

Through all the current analyses of civilization's sickness, which shadows most men's minds with apprehension and some with desperation, there runs a single thread, like a persistent and wearisome *motif*: The knowledge and skills of modern civilization have outrun the moral and spiritual resources for their direction and control. The imperative need today, overshadowing all the other unnumbered and urgent needs, is—firmer character, higher integrity, larger spiritual vision, unimpeachable and unshakable fidelity, fuller devotion, and what one of our foremost American statesmen keeps pleading for—a righteous and dynamic faith.

Here, again, the motivation is largely expediential—the desire to produce more useful public citizens. But the assump-

tion which underlies the motive is here, likewise, more than pragmatic. It concerns the *nature of man* and his needs.

In this sphere also, we are being led back behind a conception which has largely dominated education in the recent epoch, that man is primarily an intellect to be instructed and trained, to the conception which guided our forebears who first planted schools on this continent, including the founders of this College, and which led them so prevalingly to place higher education firmly under religious auspices—that human nature is bipolar—mind and soul, and that the concern of learning is with the whole man as with the Whole Truth, to lead forth his mind into an apprehension of that Truth and his soul into a disciplined and obedient loyalty to its imperious commands. The task of education is both to fill the mind and to form the soul.

VIII

The desired ends can be achieved, but only on true pre-suppositions and by necessary means. What is required is nothing less than an about-face, "conversion," in both the assumptions and goals of our living; and also of the training of our youth. Not the curriculum only, but every aspect of philosophy and structure and spirit in education, cries for radical remaking. The great new secular institutions, themselves so largely uncritical products of that which must be recast, appear almost beyond the possibility of reclamation. But the more ancient and smaller colleges, planted initially on sound foundations, still bearing in their being something of their original heritage—here there is hope! Perhaps this is the challenge to St. John's on the threshold of a new advance.

