

9-19-1946

Notes: Opening Convocation: What is Required of Us (Fragments), 1946

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Memorandum

For

What Is Required of Us?

1. Sept. 1946 will go down in the history of American education as one of the most profoundly significant in the entire story of the efforts of our democracy to train its youth for the rights & duties of responsible citizenship - a turning point - for 200 years higher education the privilege of the few - largely based on financial status - ability to carry the cost - now this month more American men & women are entering colleges than ever before - permanent condition - meaning? - many things - only one: the American colleges will assume a far more important position in the life - what it does or does not do will be far more significant - may well determine the future of Am. democracy - even Western civilization - twin cornerstones - the humanism of Athens & the religion of Calvary -

2. Reason for question: What is required of us? - all of us - a university, family, heart of our country, teachers & students gathered on a quiet campus in an hour of the world's winnowing - certainly it would be a tragedy - black & unforgivable - if we regarded our years together as an interlude between the process of war & the pursuits of peace - or taught's learned brown piece of knowledge without wisdom - or turned the freedom of campus life into the channels of license - eat, drink, be merry for tomorrow some men of us may have to die - no, I think all of us agree that the American campus - of today & tomorrow - & ours - must be something different, greater & better, than we have had in the past -

Memorandum

For _____

5. Required of us? ^{to} Take part in the struggle between
 exclusion emphasis on vocational training & the evolution
 emphasis on liberal education. ~~men~~ & women in the
 armed forces - application blank - get a job, make
 a living, get going - understandable - but I am sure
 too that they had other things in mind - hard to
 put into words - learn how to live - see life steadily -
 unify knowledge. know what it's all about - not
 merely engineers, lawyers, doctors, business men - but educated
 men & women with generosity of mind & soul - who
 will know God and man & will love them both -

6. ^{XX} So - 1.49. - great things are required of us in the
 + years that now lie promising before us - years of
 work & decision - of darkness & light - of hope &
 faith - [do you wonder ^{that there is an explicit}
 absent of warmth in my greeting to you - & my good
 wishes for a happy & successful year? And will you
 who are here for the first time forgive me if I
 ask my faithful colleagues on the faculty & some of our
 + older students to remember with me for a moment
 another morning in this auditorium - a dark, dreary,
 winter morning - less than 400 here - Dec. 7, 1942 -
 + first anniversary of Pearl Harbor - a terrible year -
 Pearl Harbor, Java, Batavia, Singapore - comparable to
 1798 - 1863 - 1918 - recall too where the men in
 this auditorium today were on that morning - in
 every corner of the globe - the regular announcements here
 of another death - lives snuffed out in our hearts -
 the presence in this room -