

**ORATION ON AMERICAN EDUCATION,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE WESTERN
LITERARY INSTITUTE AND COLLEGE
OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS, AT THEIR
FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER
1834 (P. 42 INCOMPLETE)**

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THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ

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ORATION

ON

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DELIVERED BEFORE

THE WESTERN LITERARY INSTITUTE

AND

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS,

AT THEIR FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER, 1884.

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ,

OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

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MEMORANDUM.

Having been long satisfy'd, that the orthography of the English language not only admitted but requir'd a reform; and believing it my duty to act on this conviction, I hav publishd sevral pamphlets accordingly. I felt that *speculation* on the propriety of the change was of little avail, without *practice*. I therefore resolv'd to set the example, at the hazard of ridicule and censure: and the charge of caprice or singularity. The changes in this piece consist chiefly, if not wholly of the following. (1) The silent *e* is omitted in such classes of words as *disciplin*, *respū*, *believ*, *creativ*, *publishd*, *remaind*, *evry*, *several*, *wholly*. (2) The *e* is suppress'd and an apostrophe substituted, after the manner of the poets, where the simple omission of the *e* might change the sound of the preceding vowel from long to short, as in *requir'd*, *refin'd*, *deriv'd*. (3) In nouns ending in *y*, I hav simply added an *s* to make the plural, instead of changing *y* into *ie* and then adding an *s*, as in *pluralitys*, *enmitys*, *harmonys*, *aristocracys*. (4) In verbs ending in the letter *y*, instead of changing it into *ie*, and then adding an *s*, or *d*, I retain the *y*, and add *s*, or *d*: as in *burys*, *buryd*, *varys*, *varyd*, *hurrys*, *hurryd*. (5) In similar verbs, where the *y* is long, I retain the *y*, omit the *e*, and substitute an apostrophe, as in *multiply's*, *multiply'd*, *satisfy's*, *satisfy'd*. (6) In such words as *sceptre*, *battle*, *centre*, I transpose the *e*, and write *scepter*, *battel*, *center*. (7) I suppress one of two and the same consonants, where the accent is not on them: as in *necessary*, *excellent*, *illustrious*, *recomend*, *effectual*, *irresistible*, *worshippers*. (8) In such words as *honor*, *favor*, *savior*, *neighbor*, *savor*, the *u* is omitted. (9) In adjectives ending in *y*, instead of forming the comparativ and superlativ by changing *y* into *ie* and adding *er*, and *est*, I hav retain'd the *y*, and simply added the *er* and *est*, as in *easier*, *easiest*, *holyer*, *holiest*, *prettier*, *prettiest*.

In quotations and proper names, I hav not felt call'd upon to change the orthography.

IV.—AMERICAN EDUCATION.

ORATION, ON THE SUBJECT "THAT NEITHER THE CLASSICS NOR
THE MATHEMATICS SHOULD FORM A PART OF A SCHEME
OF GENERAL EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY,"

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ.

"The schoolmaster is abroad." This was the language of Mr. Brougham, in reference to the progress of popular improvement in England. If the schoolmaster be abroad there, as he certainly is, it would be strange indeed, if he were not also abroad in our land of popular institutions. Here, the people are all, and every thing is the people's. All exists thro' them and for them. Government, the various institutions of society, religious, literary, and benevolent; all that belongs to arts and arms; whatever blesses our country at home, and sustains her reputation abroad; all proceeds from, and is administered for the people.

The schoolmaster, then, is abroad in our land. We rejoice at it, as one of the signs of the times. It is, as it were, the lifting up of one corner of the curtain of futurity, that a glimpse may be caught, of the glorious prospect which I believe to be now conceal'd from our view. The schoolmaster is one of the chief workmen, I may almost say the principal, in preparing for the genius of America, in the bright years of that futurity, the most magnificent edifice, that the mind of a nation ever inhabited. We pause not to make good by arguments or proofs, an assertion so grateful to our national pride. It would not be difficult to establish it on the foundation of facts, and by the most convincing moral reasonings, drawn from the experience of the past in all ages and countrys, and from the actual development of society thus far, in the United States. But we have other objects now in view; and we therefore trust, for the present, at least, to the national feelings of the audience, and to their aspiration for such a glorious destination hereafter, to bear me out in the sentiment I have advanced.

The schoolmaster is abroad in our land; but whose schoolmaster? He professes to teach the people, and he does give instruction to a great many. Still the question recurs, whose schoolmaster is he? In other words, is he the people's schoolmaster? The answer to this most important, and interesting question, does not depend upon the enquiry; "whom does he instruct?" but upon this, "*what does he teach?*" The character of the people of each successive generation is staked to an incalculable extent, on the capacity and faithfulness of those instructors. Grant them to be under the influence of the most just pride, of a high sense of duty, and of anxiety to be useful. Still we ask the question, "Are they what they should be?" "Do they teach what they ought?" We fear that both enquiries must receive a negative reply.

The schoolmaster, who is abroad in our land, is not the people's schoolmaster, in spirit and in truth, unless he teach them, what is indispensable to their prosperity, happiness and true glory. **HE MUST BE THE CHRISTIAN, THE AMERICAN SCHOOLMASTER:** *he must give them a truly christian and American education, to make them what they should be, peculiarly a christian and American people.* Are these the great end, and practical operation of the scheme of education, now established in our country? We know that they profess to have these in view. But while such are the ostensible objects, (I speak thus without reproach to the purity and sincerity of their founders' motives,) are these ends attained in any degree, proportioned to the wants of the community, and the demand of the spirit of the age in which we live? I speak boldly, but frankly, when I say, that in my opinion the harvest is lamentably deficient, both in the quantity and the quality. The soil is capable of as strong, and luxuriant a growth, as in any other country, ancient or modern; for who, at least on this side the Atlantic, is a believer in the fabulous philosophy of Buffon, that man is degenerate in America. The rain and the dew, darkness and sunshine, clouds and refreshing gales, are bestowed as bountifully here, as elsewhere. But neither the seed that is sown, nor the mode of tillage that is employed, is fitted to accomplish the great objects of a prudent farmer, as rich and abundant harvest, the ornament of his fields whilst in

progress, and the source of comfort, happiness, and ever increasing prosperity, when gathered. I have spoken metaphorically: but I am sure you all comprehend, that I mean to express the distinct opinion, and I may add the settled conviction, that the great body of the materials employd in education in our country, are altogether unsuited to furnish, *what I regard as the only legitimate object of a system of instruction with us, A CHRISTIAN AND AMERICAN EDUCATION.* Is this important end attaind? I shall endeavor to show that it is not, and why it is not: and likewise in what manner only, in my judgment at least, it can be attaind.

May I be pardon'd, if I turn aside for a few moments, to disburthen myself of a thought, which finds here its appropriate place. I condemn to a vast extent, all our existing schemes. I think them radically defectiv in elements and modes. In one, who has spent the last twenty-five years at the bar, and has never had any practical knowlege as a teacher, except in the instruction of his children, it may be deemd presumptuous to set up his speculations, against the experience which founded and administers a practical system. I am willing to bear the reproach of presumption, if it be only admitted, that I have no selfish purpos to answer, no false pride to gratify; that I honestly believe I am engaged in the discharge of an unwelcome but important duty, and that the progress and honor of religion, the happiness and improvment of our country are my objects. May I also hope that I shall not be rebuked by the sentiment, that the course which I pursue, calls in question the wisdom, virtue and patriotism, of the builders and supporters of existing schemes. In a country and an age like ours, freedom of thought and the frank declaration of our thoughts on subjects of vital interest to the people, are at once the duty and privilege of christians and Americans. He who believes that he possesses knowlege or opinions, which are fitted to save the people, is not a good man, or a good citizen, if he withholds them. In such case, he must not wait to be call'd on; for the chances are, that he never will be. He must volunteer his services. If they are accepted and acted upon, he has his reward. If they are rejected, still he has his reward; the reward of Burke