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Address by Professor Watson.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

I HAVE to thank you for the honour you have done me in nominating me the first Honorary President of your new Society—"The Philosophical Society of Queen's University." With the objects you have in view I need hardly say that I deeply sympathize. Those I take to be mainly two : (1) The discussion of any of those philosophical problems bearing upon any department of human life in which you may be interested, and which in some way or other every one who thinks at all finds at one time or another forced upon his attention ; (2) The drawing together of the students of the University by the bond of a common interest, whatever the special studies may be which claim their main attention.

(1) As to the first point, I think any one who takes an interest in the progress of the human race is bound to deal with philosophical problems. These are not the days when a man is allowed to retain his faith in higher things without a struggle. He has to wrestle for and win it "so as by fire." Carlyle has spoken of the "ages of faith" as the type of what the normal man should be, and compared philosophy to a sort of disease

that at unhappy periods assails the whole community. But, unfortunately, Faith will not come to us by our mere wishing ; and I do not know that it would be good for us if it did. And Carlyle is himself a proof that the physician could not take his own prescription. If he sometimes spoke slightly of philosophy and its ways, it was mainly because he was opposed to the barren philosophy of his day, and was seeking for a more concrete philosophy of his own. So it is with us. Whatever a man's work in life may be, he must, if he is a thinking man, be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him ; and if he does not get set in the right way in his youth, I am certain he will have some dreadful hours in the future. Harassed by the pressing cares of life, and unable to find leisure to consider the problems forced upon his notice, he will either go through life with a confused feeling that the world is out of joint and that he is not "born to set it right," or he will sink into a chronic state of hopeless scepticism, or he will fall back upon some effete form of dogmatism which will keep his higher emotions and his intellect at continual variance with each other.

Now it is partly to be saved from