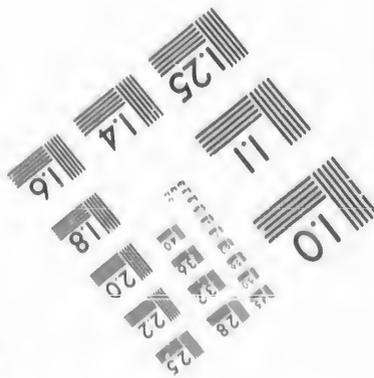
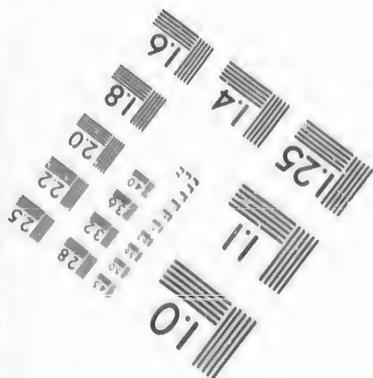
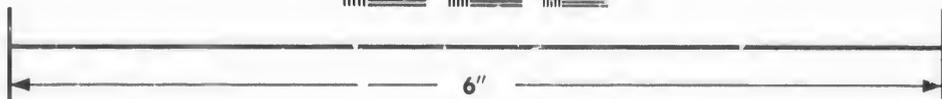
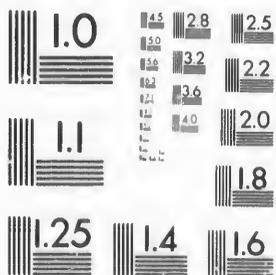


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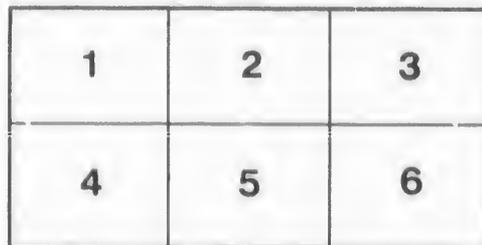
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An Address

AT

THE INAUGURATION

OF THE

HALIFAX YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

BY MATTHEW RICHEY, D.D.

DELIVERED IN

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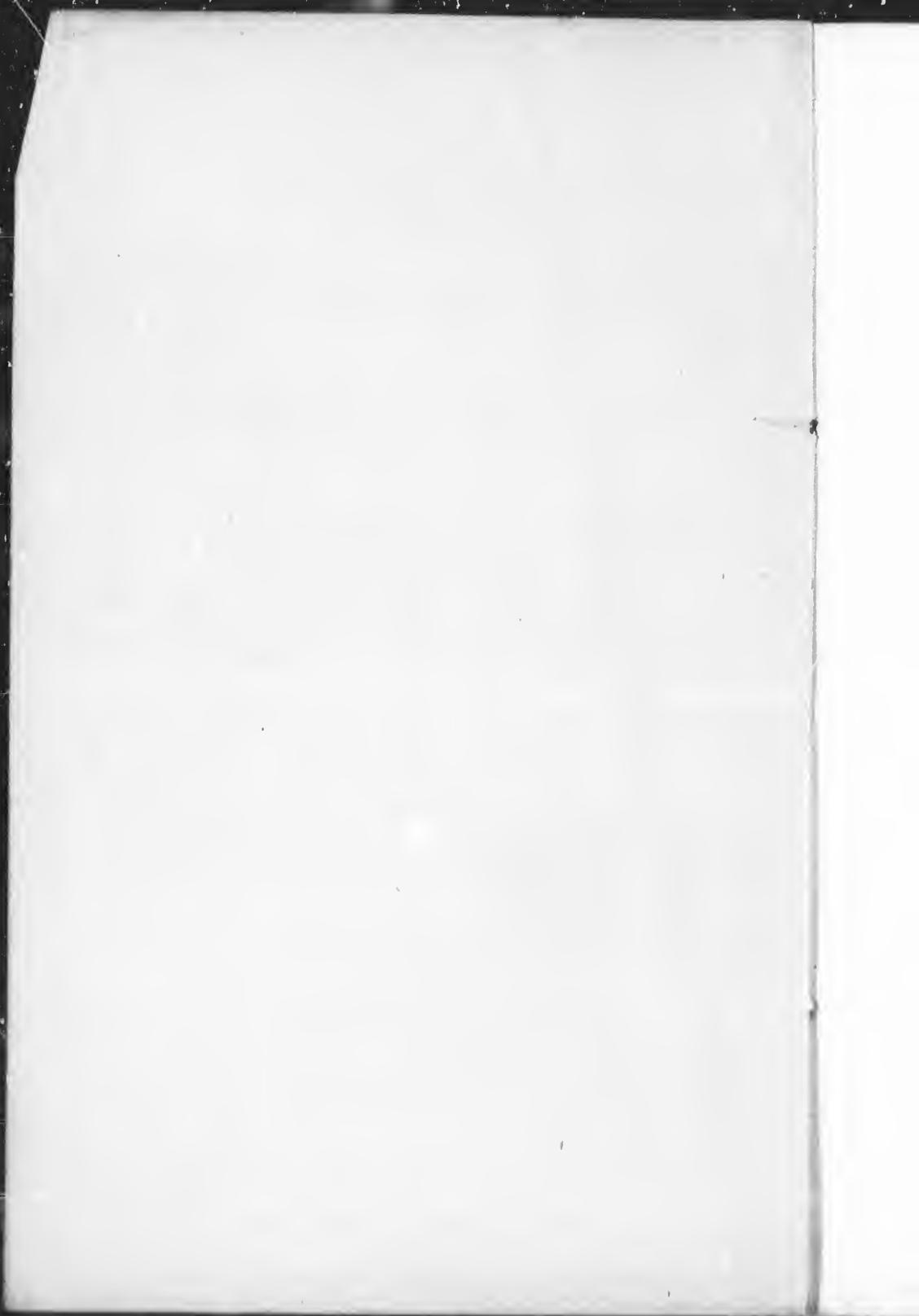
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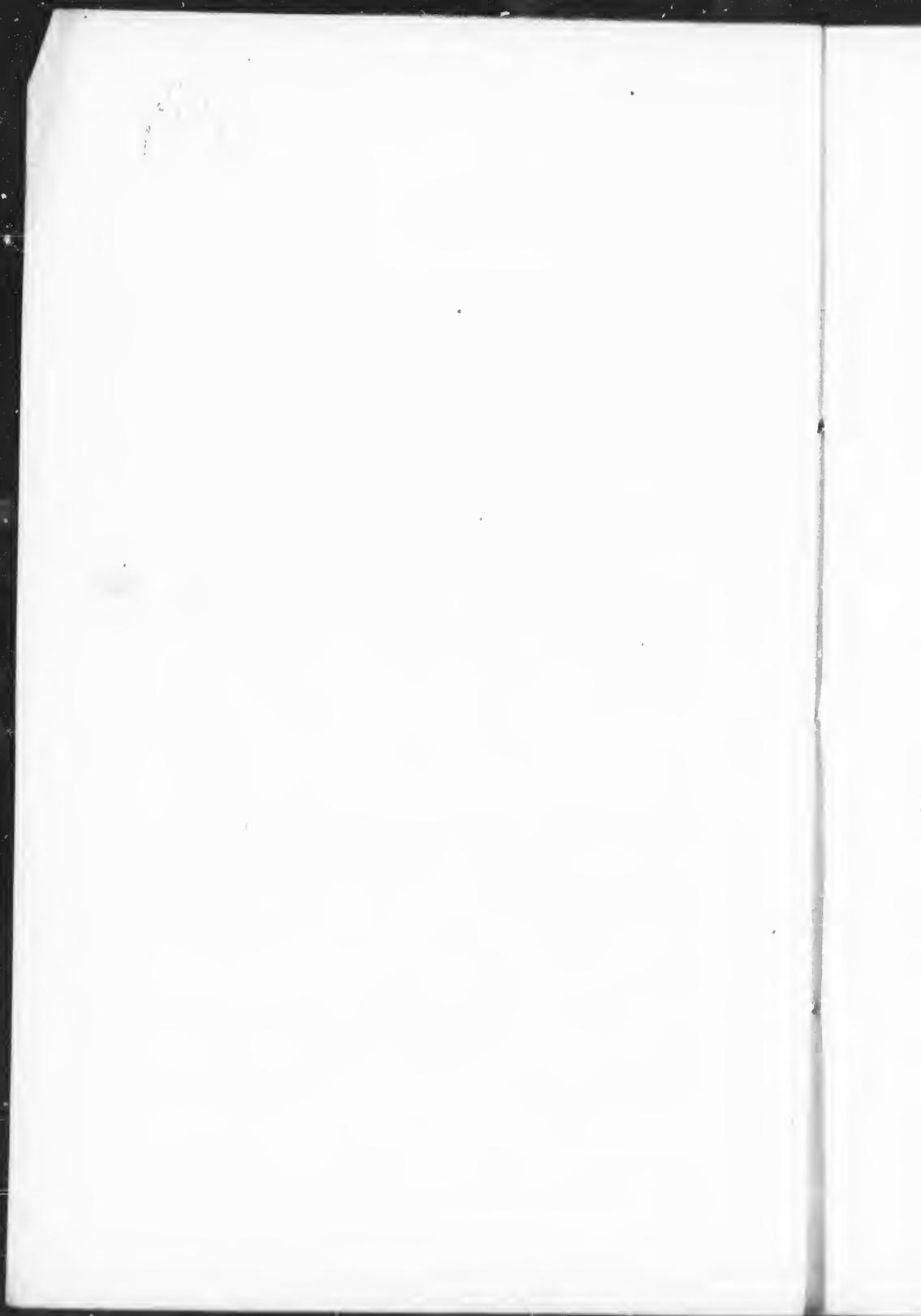
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ADDRESS.



MR. PRESIDENT AND RESPECTED CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—

One of our own poets, whose muse inhaled her deepest inspirations from the Oracles of God, has said—

“A Christian is the highest style of man.”

And distasteful as this sentiment must be to those who array themselves against Revelation, I am strongly inclined to doubt whether even an infidel critic would venture to stigmatize it as a mere poetical exaggeration. The moral code of Christianity, everybody knows, has not unfrequently been panegyricized by writers, who, with flagrant inconsistency, have strenuously labored to sap the superstructure which they professed so ardently to admire,—for take away the doctrines and Divine authority of the New Testament, and its system of Ethics is left without either sanction or support. There is however a *significance* in this fact that ought not to be overlooked. Does it not evince that the verdict of conscience often harmonizes with truth when the intellect is perverted by speculative error? Does it not show that there is a majesty in Christian principle which exacts the reluctant homage even of those who belong to the same moral category with Medea in Ovid?

“Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.”

Though the vassals of evil propensities themselves, they can not but approve better principles in others.

Whatever feelings the exemplification of sincere piety may awaken in the sceptical, it is always sure, though associated with the humblest condition in life, to receive a species of respect from the wise and good which no resources of affluence,—no dignity of station,—no endowments of understanding, or gifts of genius, in the absence of religious principle, have any power to elicit. Among the prominent characteristics of a denizen of Zion, as portrayed by the pen of Inspiration, he is described as one “in whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.” Nor does the honour which he renders to such resemble a cold compliaunce with the maxims of conventional courtesy; it is the spontaneous tribute of the heart to appreciated worth.

It will, I think, be readily admitted on all hands, that there is no class of persons more justly entitled to this discriminating regard than young men, who not merely sustain but adorn a profession of Christian discipleship. Not to glorify God in them would be to depreciate the grace by which, in the morning of life, they have been called to glory and virtue. In their renunciation of the pleasures of sin at a period when those pleasures solieit under their most illusory and seducing aspects, we cannot but recognize the blessed work of the Divine Spirit in one of its most convincing and attractive developments. No agency less potent could evoke from the centre of a heart naturally prone to unhallowed indulgence, and demanding with the fervid importunity of youthful desire, “Who will show us any good?” the devout aspiration, “Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!” Such trophies of redeeming power are of peculiarly happy omen to the Church of God. Christian young men are strong; and *pledged* by their profession to consecrate their energies to the cause of

Christ. Baptized for the dead, they reinforce the ranks of the sacramental host; gladdening the hearts, and strengthening the hands of older disciples. Especially is this the case when they afford practical evidence that they are really alive to the responsibilities which their position imposes,—that they yearn to testify their love to Christ by doing good to the souls for whom he died;—that whilst they exult in the privileges of their high adoption, they are emulous to be “the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine, as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” When they manifest this spirit, it were suicidal in the Churches not to cheer them with their countenance and aid them by their counsel. If it be a fundamental law of our nature—as those who have studied the philosophy of the moral feelings tell us it is—that the sympathy which does not find an outlet through some channel of beneficent action flows back upon its sources, and congeals about the well-springs of humanity and compassion, then is it a dictate of the highest wisdom, not only to cultivate the activities of Christian benevolence *ourselves*, but also to afford them all the encouragement and facilities in our power in *others*.

The object of our present Meeting is one, therefore, in which the hearts of Christians of all denominations may coalesce without compromise. Already has the announcement of the formation of the “*Halifax Young Men's Christian Association*,” diffused gladness through hundreds of families in this community; and the numerous assemblage now convened on so short notice and notwithstanding the inclemency of the evening, to celebrate its inauguration, is a gratifying proof of the powerful and pervading interest which it has excited in the public mind.

I deprecate any reference to personal considerations that might seem to savour of self-seeking, or justly expose me to the charge of egotism. Yet I may be permitted to say, that had I measured the ability necessary to perform the duty that now devolves upon me by the estimate I entertain of the importance of this occasion; with the deepest sensibility to the honour intended me by the Association I should certainly have respectfully declined it. But I have long been taught to consider the first suggestion of conscience a much safer guide in matters of duty, than any subsequent calculations of prudence, or motives of expediency. And I trust I was prompted by a respect for that moral canon when I consented without gainsaying, to give this unimportant-expression of the profound interest I feel in so good a cause.

In order to form an intelligent appreciation of the character and claims of this Organization it seems necessary to look at its objects—at the elements which predominate in its constitution—and at the means and agencies by which it proposes to fulfil its benevolent mission. The topics thus suggested, it will immediately be perceived, are copious both in argument and illustration; but I shall endeavour to resist the temptation to expand them beyond the limits proper to be observed on the present occasion.

That which forms the specific, distinctive object of this Association is, as its Articles state—*the improvement of the spiritual and mental condition of Young Men.*

By this very intelligible announcement we at once perceive that it takes no equivocal position. It avows at the very outset, humbly yet honestly, and in unmistakable terms, its principles and intentions. Those with whom this movement originated, having given themselves to the Lord, are not ashamed to confess before the world, that a regard to

their own and other young men's *spiritual* interests, is their first solicitude,—the most impulsive motive by which they are actuated. Were it otherwise they would be ill-fitted for the function they have undertaken. Constituted as this world is, he who is to be deterred or diverted from the path of duty by the chilling leer of the formalist, or the ambitious pre-verbs and malignant innuendoes of the infidel, is not likely to do God much service, or the souls of men much good. I dwell upon this point because it is, in my estimation at least, one of very great practical importance. It is, I conceive, most desirable, that *the distinctively Christian character and objects* of this organization should be clearly apprehended. Whilst it looks with a benignant aspect on all legitimate efforts and enterprises whether to promote the material interests of Society, or the cause of moral reform, and hopes to exercise upon them all a friendly influence; it yet humbly aspires to move in a higher orbit,—higher, I mean, in respect of the spirituality of its main design, and of the measures it proposes to employ for its achievement. And here I would take the liberty to say;—If zeal for the salvation of the souls of young men do not animate the heart of this Association; if this should ever cease to be regarded and pursued as the primary object of its mission, its appellation will be a misnomer, and its promise of usefulness an illusion. However skilfully the wheels of its machinery may be adjusted, their progress will be tardy and joyless, and they will be constantly in danger of striking off into devious paths, unless like those in the vision of the holy Seer, they are instinct with spiritual life. If we would obtain for ourselves, or be the organs of the communication to others, of Heaven's largest blessings, we must respect Heaven's established order; "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The selectest influences that descend upon man, to solace his weary pilgrimage on earth,—to enable him to fulfil his course with fidelity, and finish it with joy, do not anticipate but follow in the train of that “Godliness, which is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

And in this pregnant consideration alone,—were I to lose sight of the higher interests, and more sacred relations and responsibilities of young men—do I find an argument in favor of the Association, which appeals to some of the strongest impulses of humanity. Looking at it only from the stand-point of the *patriot*, I would say to every benevolent individual in this community: Rejoice at its birth; and foster it into vigorous efficiency. Are not all the offices and influences by which the character of society is moulded, and its destinies controlled, ordained in a few brief years, to pass into the hands of young men? You see them in innumerable numbers pressing forward with elastic step, to the marts of commerce, and the halls of legislation; to the pulpit and the bar; to the chairs of our Colleges and Universities; to exercise a most important influence upon public sentiment by the lessons of the School-room, or on public prosperity by the humbler arts and occupations of life. Whether capable of appreciating the *depositum* or not, they must, by and by, be entrusted with the most precious interests. A rich inheritance of resources and responsibilities is, by the designation of Providence, just about to devolve to them. Is it possible then to over-estimate the importance to society,—to their country, or to themselves, even in a temporal point of view, of having the hearts of young men brought under the control of those potent and undying impulses to a right course of action, which the religion of the Bible can alone minister and sustain?

I am not unaware that it has often been insinuated, and sometimes unblushingly asserted, that the Gospel, because it does not make patriotism a subject of preceptive inculcation, if not positively hostile is yet unfriendly to the cultivation of a patriotic spirit. Never was an objection more baseless. What is patriotism? Is its impersonation found in the supercilious nationality of the ancient Greek, who looked upon all beyond the precincts of his own classic clime as a mass of barbarism? or in the despotism of the Roman, regarding other tribes of the human family, as born only to be his vassals? or in the proscriptive and anathematizing spirit of the degenerate Jew? It would surely have ill accorded with the majesty and genius of the Gospel, to have consecrated by its authority such types of patriotism as these, or indeed any other incompatible with the elevated injunction, *Honour all men*.

Patriotism! venerable and hallowed name—redolent with a thousand magic associations! but how often employed to veil the turpitude of the most sordid designs.—It is the hollow profession by which the selfish politician, whose bosom the true *amor patriæ* never warmed, makes the credulous multitude the facile instruments of his ignoble purposes. It is the war-cry of the reckless demagogue, who would unchain the spirits of popular fury to overturn our most valued and venerated institutions, and revel amidst their ruins. It is at this hour the mad incantation of the Secularist, whose creed is infidelity,—whose law is lust,—whose auguries of social renovation and bliss are deceptive as the glistening falsehood by which the father of lies seduced our first parents from their allegiance to God;—whose counsels, were they universally to prevail, would break up the fountains of the great deep of human depravity, and let in a flood on the earth, before the resistless sweep of which every vestige of Christian civiliza-

tion would disappear ;—the song of whose Atheistic millennium would be the dirge of a desolated world,—its homes, its temples, and its palaces commingled in unbounded ruin.

Righteousness, and righteousness alone, exalteth a nation. When will an unbelieving and frivolous world listen,—if not to the voice of God,—to the trumpet-tongued facts of history proclaiming this truth ! This is the only guarantee for a nation's greatness and glory. Her military and naval establishments may command the respect of the world ; her statute books may burst with legislation ; she may erect her penitentiaries, and scatter her schools for secular instruction over the length and breadth of the land ; yet if religious principle be not the basis of the national character, there is a blight upon all her prosperity, and the fabric of her liberty rests upon a foundation of sand. He is the best patriot who most effectually promotes the spread of Christian piety.

But there are interests, compared with which, all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them are trivial as the toys that amused our childhood. There is a spirit in man ; and its existence will be measured only by the epochs of immortality. He who created it, and whose inspiration gives it understanding, alone fully comprehends its value. The loss of such a nature is a catastrophe from the contemplation of which the mind instinctively recoils. Pollock—lamented bard!—in touching this theme, felt how inexpressive were his most solemn notes, compared with the dread reality ; and looked around,—above,—for some harp of deep, exhaustless woe, to sing the obsequies of a lost soul,—but looked in vain :—

“ God himself laments,
And draws a cloud of mourning round his throne.
The organ of eternity is mute ;
And there is silence in the heaven of heavens.”

But there is *not* silence there when an immortal soul is saved
No : the Orchestra of heaven throws the full power of its

melody into the paean that celebrates the victory of grace in the rescue of a sinner from impending ruin. When angels endeavour to estimate the worth of souls they *individualize* them. Any other mode of computation would bewilder and overwhelm even their capacious intellects. Deem not, my Christian friends, that I am uttering paradoxes; or stooping to the arts of the declaimer for rhetorical effect. I am speaking the words of truth and soberness. I am endeavoring to penetrate your hearts and my own, with the unfathomed import of those words of Christ—"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" and,—“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth.”

Contemplated in the light of their immortal destination, and of the transcendent sacrifice offered for them upon the Cross, the redemption of *all* souls is equally precious. He who converts *any* sinner from the error of his way, achieves a work of the highest beneficence. There are, at the same time, obvious considerations, in virtue of which the conversion of the young, and especially of young men, assumes peculiar importance. Every person who is brought to God, receives, with the pardon of his sins, a rich investiture of spiritual powers and influences to be employed for the good of others. No man liveth to himself. The Bible recognizes no moral neutrality, simply because there is no such thing. By an immutable condition of our being, we are constantly exercising upon others an influence for good or for evil. He therefore who does not fear the Lord from his youth cannot make the best of life.

A man's probation for eternity, moreover, eminently lies within the limits of a few years in the earlier period of his intelligent existence. The course to which he commits himself when entering on the career of active life—an

association then formed—a single resolution then adopted, often gives a complexion to his whole character, and stamps its ineffaceable impress on his eternity. The voluptuous legend of Pagan mythology, respecting the ocean-nymph Circe, which Homer and Virgil thought not unworthy of an episode in their immortal epics, conveys an important *moral*, loudly monitory to young men. The youth who, beguiled by her fascinations, accepted from her hand the enchanted cup, became thenceforth the victim of an unrelenting destiny. Touched by her magic wand, he immediately degenerated into brutality; and if his mental faculties continued, they served only to perpetuate the conscious, humiliating contrast of his present degradation with his primal dignity.

At a crisis so momentous in the history of young men, the strong temptations of various kinds by which they are surrounded, corroborate the appeal which from the peculiar exposures of their position, they make to Christian sympathy and consideration. By nature "alienated from the life of God;" if they are not regenerated by the power, and well indoctrinated in the evidences and principles of the Gospel, the danger of their falling into some snare of the devil is most imminent.

One prolific source of that danger,—and one which contributes to augment the malign influence of every other—is the sceptical spirit of the age. It pervades a large portion of our literature; empoisons in many instances the richest fountains of scientific knowledge; and, monopolizing the pretensions and the praise of Philosophy, superciliously stigmatizes as Empiricism, all faith in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and in the greatest of all historical facts—Christianity. With a fecundity perfect

ly inexhaustible, and a sagacity illuminated by Satanic inspiration, this Proteus evi adapts its forms to all sorts of mental tastes, and moral proclivities. Is a young man fond of what, in common parlance, is called light reading? (not, I apprehend, because there is a great deal of light in it). Those abortions of sickly, sentimental, often deeply sensualized minds, in the shape of Novels, with which certain portions of the press are constantly teeming, are at hand in any desired quantities, and recommended by every quality best fitted to dwarf the intellect and taint the heart. Does he possess a mind of higher aspirings? Is he accustomed to employ his leisure hours *con amore* in scientific research? in Geology, for example, the science most in vogue, and most progressive at the present time? In how few of the productions of the Geologists of the continent of Europe, will he find, when any reference at all is made to religion, a *respectful* reference to the Biblical history of the creation. Generally speaking, the subject, though lying directly in the path of their investigations, is either passed over in significant silence; or alluded to in terms suggestive of a persuasion that Genesis and Geology can never be harmonized. Nor is the remark inapplicable to some of lofty pretensions in this department of knowledge, belonging to our own imperial Isle. Among the Geologists of the Parent Land there are those who in tracing professedly *the vestiges of Creation*, betray a disingenuous purpose to extinguish amidst the shadows of a dark and dateless antiquity, every *moral* impression of the eternal power and godhead of the Creator. Many distinguished opposite examples indeed there are: some of them worthy of all Christian honour, as well as intellectual celebrity. In this class, the author of *The Old Red Sandstone* confessedly ranks pre-eminent. Descending under his conduct, into the rich mine of geologic

knowledge, you discover at every step, amidst the solemn grandeurs that tell of unrecorded cycles through which our planet has existed, the refulgent *footprints of the Creator*. No man living—and we speak it with conscious exultation—no man living, possesses a more accurate and comprehensive knowledge of Geology, in all its classifications and details, than the very man, whose unostentatious mallet has stamped upon the science the unimpeachable veracity of Heaven's inspired Record. Thus it is that science, properly so called; that is, when it becomes in any of its departments so intelligent and truthful as to entitle its testimony to be received as evidence, invariably honors the Scriptures. In the prattle of its infancy, and the puerilities of its childhood, it may have, and indeed too often has, indulged sceptical notions, and spoken unadvisedly; but on reaching or approaching its majority, it has never failed to bring its offerings into the temple of Revelation; and, reverently deposing them before its shrine, to confess—"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." As a minister of Christ, I rejoice in the progress of all that deserves the name of knowledge. It promotes a closer and more critical examination, and issues with equal certainty in a worthier appreciation, of the treasures of that Volume which alone contains the wisdom of God.

There is a class of young men who, whether in virtue of their mental idiosyncrasy, or in consequence of a certain bias which adventitious circumstances and associations have imparted to their minds, see little to admire either in the attractions of popular literature or the brilliant discoveries of modern science. The visionary abstractions of rationalistic philosophy delight them rather. Placing themselves under the tuition of some such sceptical and erratic genius as the

famous Carlyle, they soon soar into aerial regions, whence they lose sight of the vulgar herd beneath, or look down upon them and upon their faith and fancies alike, with sovereign contempt. They are now philosophers, falsely so called; wise, but it is only in their own conceit. They have, however, become sufficiently initiated in the mysteries of that species of Pantheism, now so current in some circles, of which the central blasphemy is self-deification, to be completely emancipated from the slavery of the popular superstition which reveres the Bible as the word of the living God. The oracles framed by the adroitness of the high priest of "this new consecration of humanity" are marked by more than Pythian ambiguity. In this strange evolution of Teutonic transcendentalism—for it is in truth neither more nor less—we recognize however two points of analogy to almost all the speculative systems of unbelief, shaded only with a veil of gossamer:—Whilst it affects to dignify man, it really depreciates him; and, acknowledging God in words, it virtually and practically denies Him. We inquire, What is man—his nature and destination? And the response muttered from the "dream grotto" of this vain and deceitful philosophy is—"We are—we know not what; light-sparkles floating on the æther of Deity." We ask, What is God? and we are left to gather the answer from tedious and tortuous prelections; all the lore and logic of which, concentrated in a single sentence, might, without exaggeration, be thus announced:—I am God; every thing is God; it follows that there is no personal God with whom I have to do as my moral Governor and Judge. It would be a waste of time to dilate on either the revolting blasphemy or moral tendency of such a system; if incoherent assumptions and anomalies,—the phantoms of a fevered if not frenzied imagination,—may claim the name of a system.

I have thus indicated—very partially and inadequately, I confess—yet sufficiently, perhaps, for my immediate purpose, the immeasurable importance of enlightened religious decision, to panoply young men for the conflicts, and prepare them for the duties, of life; to enable them to pass unscathed through the midst of the fiery darts of the wicked one, flying thick around them, and yearly mowing down by thousands those who have neglected in the morning of life to place themselves under the protection of the shield of faith. The momentous question, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” never received a right answer but from the Inspiration that suggested it—“By taking heed thereto according to thy word:” and all observation and experience illustrate the Divinity of the oracle. Under the benignant auspices of “the wisdom from above,” only, are youth safe. But here, they *are* safe. Guided by her counsels and animated with her holy inspirations, their lives will be happy, useful, and honourable; and when they enter the vale of death, she will place upon their brow the victor’s garland, the blessed prelude to the triumphs of immortality. Nobler purposes than these, benevolence itself cannot desire to promote, or human agency hope to achieve: and these are the objects which, in connexion with the intellectual progress of young men in sacred and general knowledge, the Association we are this evening assembled to inaugurate, is *pledged*, by the principles that constitute its basis and its bond, to prosecute, in humble dependence upon the Divine blessing. The legitimacy and laudableness of an enterprise so pure and lofty in its motives and aspirations would seem to be perfectly unassailable by *argument*, unless some just occasion can be found against the rectitude of its constitutional principles, or the wisdom of its practical measures. Of these topics— unquestionably of fundamental importance—

—the present appears to be an appropriate time to offer some elucidations.

No profound or painstaking analysis is at all necessary in order to discover the spiritual elements that preponderate in the Constitution of this Society. They are few and obvious; and, naturally blending together by virtue of their mutual affinities, they impart an aspect of divine simplicity to the cause—the surest test of its excellence, and, certainly, among the best auspices, under zealous management, of destined success. Those elements—three in number—may be distinctively characterised as the *biblical*, the *evangelical*, and the *catholic* element. Let us look at these points.

The young men who constitute this Association set out with the practical recognition of the principle laid down by the beloved disciple, that if they would be strong and overcome the wicked one, the word of God must abide in them. On this they depend as “the shield of their help, and the sword of their excellency.” This is the pole-star to which they purpose constantly to look, to determine their latitude, and direct their course. I would rather say; this is the *Sun*,—kindled in the moral heavens by the inspiration of the Almighty,—in the glorious light, and under the genial warmth, of which, unshaded by the haze and unchilled by the vapours of human dogmas and speculations, they enter into covenant to walk with God themselves, and to be workers together with Him, in seeking the good of others. To the *prayerful study of the Word of God*, in their Bible Classes, by the members of this sacred League, I look as the very sinew of its strength,—the mainspring of its efficient operation,—and the divine source whence must emanate all its healthful and healing influences. And I speak advisedly, and emphatically, when I say, their *prayerful study of the*

word: for while I doubt not that in their laudable desire to appreciate the varied literature and penetrate the profound science of the Scriptures, they will collect around them a choice selection of the best helps, furnished so abundantly at the present period by learning and research, for those purposes; I confess I place much more dependence upon their devout invocation of the promised anointing of the Holy One, for their proficiency in biblical knowledge, than upon all other aids and resources put together. The Bible is best understood when we seek in it, not merely, nor principally, the gratification of curiosity and taste, or an increase of intellectual illumination; but "virtues, powers, inspirations;" when, as we pass on from passage to passage, and from page to page, the utterance of the heart is ascending to its Author, like incense, in olden time, before the Oracle.— "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!" There is no blinder guide to the interpretation of the richest portions of the Divine word, than a Commentator who brings to the work of exposition a mind enriched with erudition but a heart utterly estranged from God,—who undertakes that important function, leaning, in the pride of his attainments, to his own understanding, instead of trusting in the Lord. Such expositors sadly darken the counsel which they deem themselves competent to develop.

What devout student of the Scriptures in looking to such critics for the solution of doubts, or the dissipation of obscurities, has not proved them to be broken reeds, whereon if a man lean, they will go into his hand and pierce it? "I have sometimes felt,"—says an accomplished theologian and scholar,— "I have sometimes felt, when reading works that exhibit the destructive processes of criticism, as one standing amidst the unfolding mists of an autumn morn: it seemed

as if Heaven itself had vanished from my view,—as if the mountains with their majestic outline had fled, and the mirror of the waters reflected blank negation, and as if nothing were left but the narrow spot of earth I was treading, wet with the tears of creation and overhung with gloom. But I looked upwards to the throne, and Him who sits on the right hand of it: I said, ‘Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.’ And then the eternal verities, the imperishable forms,—the Mediator, the mercy-seat, the adoring cherubim—were revealed in the splendour of a Father’s smile; as the breath of the morning breeze scatters the vapours, and the mountains stand forth, lofty and immoveable as ever, while the bosom of the waters sparkles beneath the rising sun.” In thus delineating his own mental exercises and feelings, Mr. Thompson* has daguerreotyped the experience of which thousands have been conscious, but which no one before ever so vividly portrayed. Happy will the fellowship of this Institute be, if those united in it are imbued with these sentiments and regulated by these principles in searching the Scriptures. Then will they not only admire the goodly stones and exquisite architecture of the temple of inspired truth; but, passing by faith within the veil, behold the glory of the enthroned SHEKINAH.

Another characteristic feature of the constitution under review, is its *evangelical* element. And it certainly can create no surprise that an Association which takes the Bible for its basis should be evangelical in doctrine. I employ this epithet,—as I am persuaded it is used in the

* See an Address delivered at the Congregational Theological Institution, Glasgow, by Alexander Thompson, A.M.

Articles of the Association,—in no sense intentionally repelient towards those with whom the views of Christian doctrine usually thus designated find little favour. But it seems necessary to distinguish things that differ : and this is eminently important when the things in question involve eternal interests, and the difference an irreconcilable antagonism. If men, therefore, *will* give the name of Gospel to such things as a certain platform of ecclesiasticism—to a mere system of ethics, or the *opus operatum* theory of sacramental salvation ; it surely behooves the friends of spiritual religion, to rescue that hallowed name from such gross perversion ; and vindicate its exclusive appropriation to *the truth as it is in Jesus*. And, have they not a high precedent for so doing ? “ I marvel,” says Paul to the Galatians, “ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel : which is not another ; but there be some which trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” Justification—not through the medium of any official efficacy or authority wielded by mortal, but—through *personal* faith alone, in the blood of Him who on the altar of his Divinity offered himself without spot unto God, is the grand central truth, from which all the other doctrines in the evangelical system radiate as naturally and necessarily as light from the orb of day.

Inseparably associated with, and resting immovably upon this corner-stone, the entire fabric of vital Christianity stands in all the grace and grandeur of its proportions. The depth of man's fall by sin, and the dignity, purity and glory, for his exaltation to which full provision is made in the purchase and promise of the Spirit, are not isolated dogmas, but correlatives of the sacrificial death of him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his

blood. Take away any one of these doctrines, and you destroy the foundation; you remove the key-stone from the arch that spans the dreary chasm which separates sinning man from his offended Creator.

In happy accordance with that recognition of the supremacy of the Scriptures, and firm adhesion to their vital doctrines, which distinguish this Association, is the spirit of genuine *catholicity* that pervades and animates it. It regards "faith in Christ Jesus, and love unto all the saints," as principles coeval in the experience of every true believer; and the union of which is essential to the symmetry of his character, and the honour of Christianity. And really, it is high time in this the nineteenth century of the Christian era, that one of the divinest of mysteries,—that of *brotherly love*,—were revealed to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;—time, that those who have one hope, one baptism, and acknowledge one Lord; who are members of the same spiritual household, and joint heirs of the same glory, should strike their hands, and blend their hearts, in a covenant of peace; should heap coals of fire—the fire of charity—upon the *odium theologicum*, the acrimony that has been so long the reproach of religious controversy; and,—in honour of Him who prayed that all who believe in him might be one,—utterly consume it.

What are the points of dissonance among real Christians, compared with those in respect of which they are at unity? What are the elements of mutual repulsion that alienate, compared with the attractive forces that ought to draw them, together—the celestial ligaments which do in point of fact unite them so closely with each other, by uniting them *all* to their Divine Head?—If, moreover, "the love of the truth that dwelleth in" our fellow-Christians, "and shall be with

them," is the only true motive and measure of our peculiar spiritual affection to them as such, who hath bewitched us, that we should, for a moment, imagine *that truth* to be embodied, not in the essential principles of the gospel of Christ in which we agree, but in the denominational peculiarities in which we differ? Satanic sorcery furnishes the only adequate solution of the phenomenon. The doctrines in which all evangelical churches substantially accord, are, by eminence, *the truth*; they contain the heroic medicines, —as they have been felicitously called,—of the Gospel pharmacopœia, sufficient, and alone sufficient, for the soul's maladies. Whoever, then, exemplifies in spirit and life, unfeigned faith in those doctrines; with whatever form of church polity he may be allied,—however he may differ with me on points of minor importance,—or whether, as one expresses it, his baptismal font be an ocean or a goblet, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."—In every aspect, the candid and dispassionate must, we think, admit, that the component elements of the constitution of this Association, will sustain the closest scrutiny; and are justly entitled to the unsuspecting confidence of all classes of professed Christians, who have at heart the best interests of the generation now about to receive and exercise the most important influences on the church and society at large.

On the *means* and *agencies* by which it is proposed to carry out the benevolent intentions of the Association our time will not permit me to dwell; albeit, to unfold their special adaptations, in the latent principles of their influence, as well as in their actual operation, would furnish a highly suggestive topic, alike of philosophic interest and practical utility. But I must wave its discussion; and content myself with simply referring to the Library and Reading

Room of the Society, the mental wealth and attractions of which will be constantly receiving fresh accessions of select standard and periodical works, religious and literary;—to its meetings for prayer which will be open to all young men disposed to attend them;—to its Bible Classes, which, surrounding from week to week the fount of Inspiration will from thence ‘in their golden urns draw light;’—to its courses of Lectures on Religious subjects, as well as on subjects having reference to religion, and, in a word, the employment of every other available means whereby the increase of vital religion may be promoted.* From a machinery so admirably constructed; and plied by the zeal and energy of Christian young men; whose years and associations give them access to a numerous and interesting class, almost precluded by their position from pastoral influence, the most blessed results may with moral certainty be anticipated.

I freely confess that I regard the rise and rapid expansion of these Societies as among the most animating signs of the eventful times that are passing over us. My spirit rejoices when I see them already numbered by hundreds; diffusing the leaven of truth and vital piety not only in the larger cities of England and America but in France, Germany, Italy, Australia, and other portions of the world. And yet this evangelical confederacy is only in its infancy. On what a bright career of spiritual conquest may it not be privileged exultingly to look back fifty years hence!

There was a moment of surpassing interest in the history of England's matchless hero on whom the sepulchre has just closed:—a moment, when not the dynasties and destinies of Europe merely, but the fate of the civilized

* See the 11 Article of the Constitution.

world seemed abandoned to the trepidations of the balance of chance ;—a moment when—if an imaginative association may be tolerated on so grave a theme—the Genius of Liberty, hovering over the field of death, and awaiting with agonizing interest the issue of the mighty contest, may be supposed to have felt a paroxysm of apprehension, lest she were doomed by her own reluctant immolation on the altar of despotism, to consummate the horrors of the day. But, the opportune appearance of the Prussian force changed instantaneously the whole aspect of the scene, struck terror into the armies of the alien, scattered them as chaff before the whirlwind ; and entwined around the brow of Liberty the amaranth of triumph, still blooming in all its freshness.

Friends of the Redeemer, and of a redeemed world ! Have we not reached a crisis in the great *moral* conflict, of which earth has been the scene ever since sin polluted its soil ? Look at the thrones and populations of continental Europe ! thrones resting upon a volcano ; their pedestal the caprice of political disaffection ; their pomp a pageant denuded of its ancient prestige : populations, a large proportion of which are gleaming in armor, and the rest groaning beneath the sway of military despotism ; sighing for ages, but hitherto sighing in vain, for a happier destiny. Look at the mighty heart of China convulsively throbbing for a higher than political emancipation ! labouring, as in the throes of national parturition, to bring forth some form of renovation and peace, the dim *ideal* of which her bewildered imagination depicts in the blended colours of holy Scripture and abject superstition ! Is it not high time for the Church of the living God to shake the locks of her hitherto untried strength, and marshal her slumbering hosts in the valley of decision ? Is she prepared for the rapidly coming crisis ? I greatly fear, not. She needs a

new baptism of fire—another Pentecost; and a large reinforcement of strength. At such a juncture, shall we not greet with a cordial welcome these Young Men's Christian Associations, coming as volunteers to our help, and bravely taking their position on the outspread field? I know not how this development may strike others: but to me it looks very much like a chosen *corps of reserve*, which the Captain of our salvation deemed it wise to keep in the shade till the exigencies of the struggle should demand the infusion of their youthful energies into his militant hosts. May they be valiant for the truth, and win unfading laurels!

Will the Young Men composing this Association, permit me before I sit down, to address to them two or three cautionary suggestions,—I will not call them counsels. I claim, my young Christian Brethren, no other authority for the suggestions I may offer, than that with which your own convictions may invest them; no higher consideration for the motive that prompts them than you may feel to be due to a profound sympathy with the objects of your institution:—

1. I would earnestly exhort you to maintain, with unswerving fidelity, the distinctively Christian character of your enterprise. It is such in name; and I rejoice to believe that it is so in deed and in truth. Keep it up to the mark! In its interior working,—in its aggressive efforts, and diffusive influences, let Christ be all and in all.

2. Love as brethren; brethren, I mean, in Christ. The love of Him is the bond, the soul, of Christian brotherhood. Within the precincts of your Association, let no eye be able to trace in the spirit of your intercourse the lines of

denominational demarcation that separate you out of it. Or if those distinctions are remembered, let them operate only as an impulse to a more expansive charity and fraternal tenderness and respect.

3. Guard with holy vigilance the portals of your Institution. Permit on no account, its sanctuary to be polluted by an i-evangelical principles or by the recognition of any persons, as members, who do not walk according to the purity of the Gospel. Relaxation here would prove fatal to your enterprise. Far be it from me to inculcate an inquisitorial spirit; but if you welcome to your fellowship any whose religious principles and practice do not accord with a profession of Christian discipleship, you may no doubt rapidly swell your numbers; but you will as certainly with equal rapidity, and in more than the same ratio, diminish your real strength.

4. In conclusion: Be not ashamed of the testimony of Christ. He was crucified for you: take up and sustain your cross for Him. He suffered without the gate: go forth to him without the camp, willingly bearing his reproach; nay, esteem that reproach higher honour than earth's loudest plaudits which will soon be drowned forever by the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, and the thunder of a disrupted universe. If Messiah the Prince has given you a banner—as I believe he has—display it because of the truth! Let it float upon the breeze in the broad light of heaven, emblazoned with the radiant inscription, *IN HOC SIGNO VINCES*. God bless your enterprise!

Nothing more than the proemial part, and a few brief notes of the body of this Address, were written before it was delivered. In writing it out for the Press, the Speaker's recollections have been materially assisted by a Report of it furnished by a short-hand writer. It is, perhaps, proper to state, that a paragraph on the 8th page, the purport of which was anticipated by the respected Chairman in his opening remarks, was for that reason omitted in the delivery. The writer has willingly acquiesced in the desire expressed for the printing of the Address; in the hope that its imperfections, of which he is deeply conscious, are not of such a nature as altogether to preclude the realization of the benefit anticipated by the HALIFAX YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, from its wider publicity.

